



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

### **Usage guidelines**

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

### **About Google Book Search**

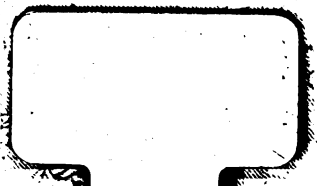
Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>

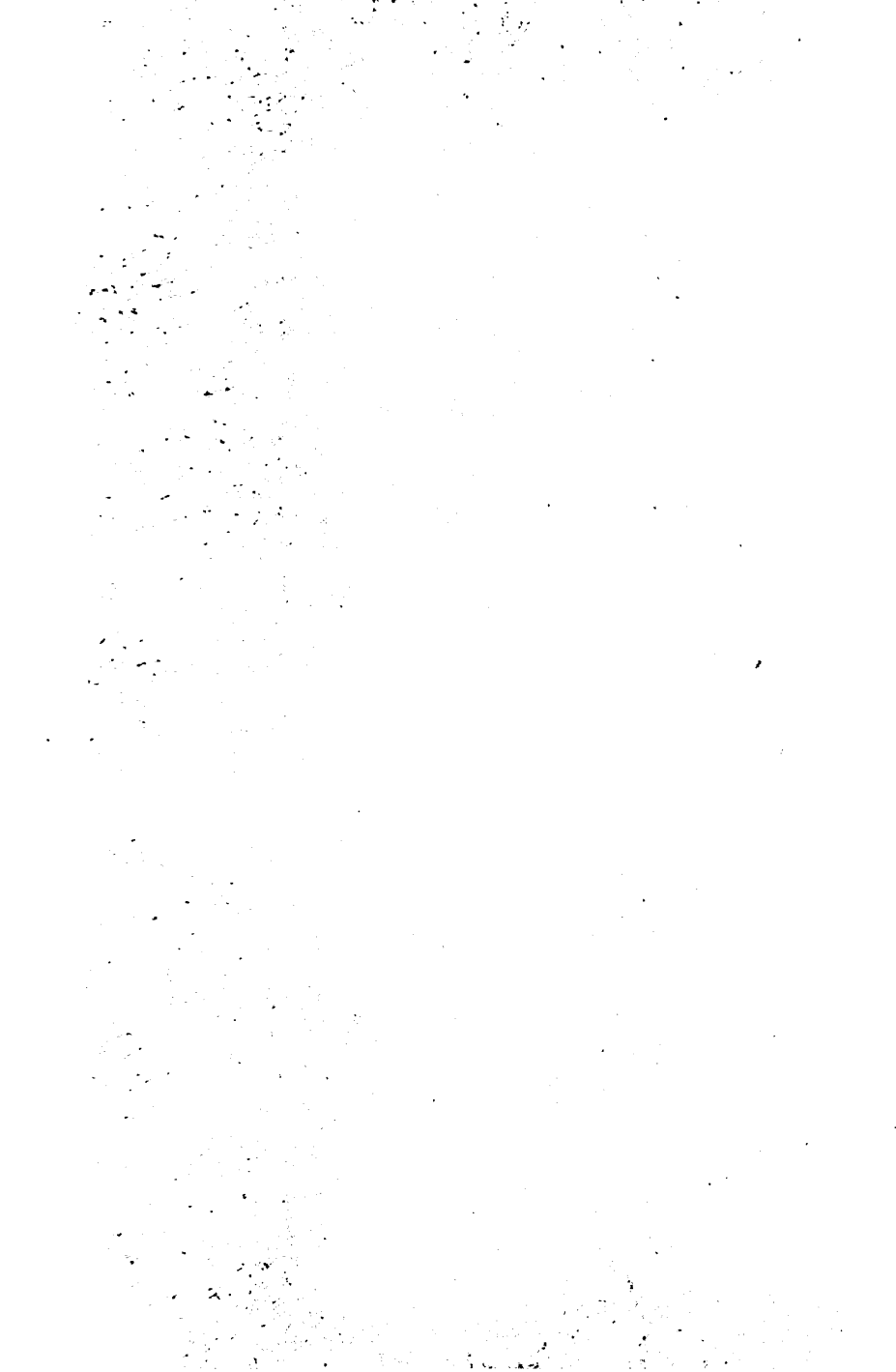


A MAN

OF HIS

WORD







A MAN OF HIS WORD

VOL. II.



# A MAN OF HIS WORD

AND OTHER STORIES

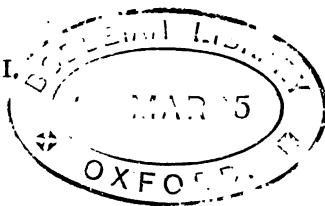
BY

W. E. NORRIS

AUTHOR OF 'NO NEW THING' 'MADEMOISELLE DE MERSAC'  
'MATRIMONY' ETC.

IN THREE VOLUMES

VOL. II.



LONDON

SMITH, ELDER, & CO., 15 WATERLOO PLACE

1885

[All rights reserved]

256 . e . 1092 .





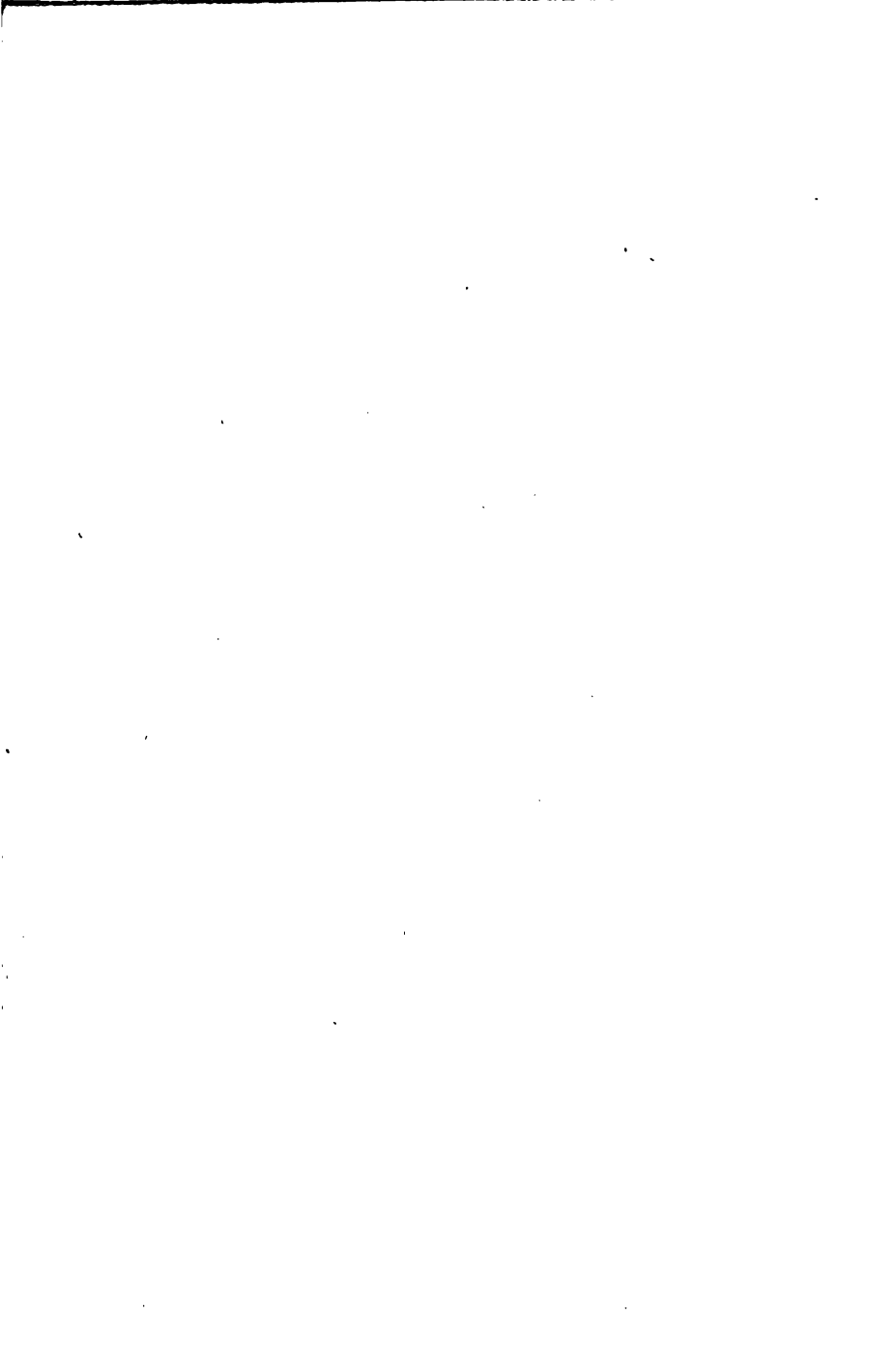
# CONTENTS

OF

## THE SECOND VOLUME.



	PAGE
THE MAN WITH THE RED HAIR ( <i>continued</i> ) . . . . .	1
NILS JENSEN . . . . .	41
THE PRINCESS PAOLINI . . . . .	135
COUNT WALDEMAR . . . . .	229



THE  
MAN WITH THE RED HAIR

*(Continued)*



## *THE MAN WITH THE RED HAIR*

### III.

ABOUT six o'clock the next morning I was roughly awakened by Percival's coming into my room and pulling the pillow from under my head.

'What *is* the matter now?' I asked, sitting up and rubbing my eyes; and I dare say I added some strong expressions; for there is nothing in the wide world that I hate so much as being roused from my slumbers in the middle of the night.

Percival sat down on the bed. 'Look here, Oliver,' he said; 'I must get out of this. After what you saw last night, I needn't tell you why. I'm not the first man who has been

made 'a fool of by a woman ; and I'm not going to break my heart about it—no fear !' Here he pumped up a hollow laugh. 'But it won't do for me to stop in this place,' he went on. 'I should be breaking somebody's neck if I did ; and I'm off to the Pyrenees this morning to shoot bears and bouquetins. After a week or two of that I shall be able to pull myself together, I expect.'

'Quite right,' I said sleepily. 'Best thing you can do.'

'I don't want to go alone, though. Now, Oliver, will you do a fellow a good turn, and come with me ? I left the tent and everything else that we shall want out there last year, and I've telegraphed to the natives to say I'm coming. It would do you all the good in the world to camp out in the mountains for a bit. Of course I pay all expenses, and I'll guarantee you some sport.'

I hardly knew what answer to make. Life

at Cannes was monotonous, to say the least of it ; I had never seen a bear in my life, except at the Zoo, and I had never seen a bouquetin at all. On the other hand, life in the wilds with so uncertain-tempered a companion as Percival might not prove an unmixed delight. He watched me eagerly while I was balancing these considerations one against the other, and forestalled my reply by exclaiming, 'For Heaven's sake, Oliver, don't say you are going to refuse ! I don't mind telling the truth to you : I'm hard hit—I am devilish hard hit.'

His voice shook a little, and upon my word I believe there were tears in his eyes.

'I *daren't* go alone,' he went on. 'So long as I'm shooting, I'm all right, and I don't care a snap for any woman in the world ; but I couldn't face the long evenings all by myself. Hang it, man ! can't you understand ? It's a case of something very like life or death, I can tell you.'



I think I mentioned before that I am extremely good-natured. This piteous appeal of Percival's turned the scale, and I said I would see him through.

Florry's face, when we made our adieux to her and her mother before starting for the station, was a very amusing study, and if Percival noticed it he must have felt himself fully entitled to score one. But I am not sure that he looked at her at all. He said in an off-hand way, 'Goodbye, Miss Neville. Meet you again some day I hope,' and plunged into the omnibus, head first, without waiting for her to make a reply.

I don't think Florry half liked it. Whether she had intended to marry Percival or not, I am very sure that she had never contemplated his bolting after so unceremonious a fashion; but of course it was too late to think of stopping him then. She took quite an affectionate farewell of me, begging me to be sure and let

her know what sport we had, and asking what my address was to be.

‘Poste Restante, Bagnères de Luchon,’ growled out Percival from the recesses of the omnibus. ‘We shan’t be much in the way of getting letters for the next fortnight, though. Come along, Oliver ; there’s no time to lose.’

Now will it be believed that, after all that had come and gone, that red-headed idiot sulked for a matter of four-and-twenty hours because my cousin had expressed her intention of writing to me? I couldn’t make out what was wrong with him at first ; but by degrees it transpired, and I had all the trouble in the world to persuade him that, putting my own blameless innocence out of the question, it was utterly illogical of him to be at the same time jealous of Lacy and of me. Indeed, it was only by threatening to abandon him to his fate at Toulouse that I managed to bring him to his

bearings. After that he became more reasonable, and both his spirits and his manners improved as soon as we had left civilisation behind us.

We spent ten days very pleasantly and successfully, upon the whole, in the wild Spanish valley where Percival had chosen to pitch our tent. No bears came our way, but we killed a lot of isards, and I was lucky enough to bring down the only bouquetin that I got a shot at. Percival shot two; which was just as well, for it would have been quite enough to upset his equanimity that the larger number should have fallen to my share. With his removal from the chastening influence of Florry's society, his queer, gusty temper had reasserted itself to some extent, and we had more than one absurd little scene with the guides and porters who accompanied us; but, taking him altogether, he was not a disagreeable companion. In point of fact, we had so few oppor-

tunities for conversation that there was not much fear of our falling out. Our days were naturally given up entirely to sport ; and when we returned to our encampment in the evening, dead beat and as hungry as hawks, neither of us wished for anything more than to partake of the savoury stew which the guides prepared for us, and to lie down afterwards with our feet to the blaze of the bonfire, listening to their long yarns or to the melancholy dirge-like songs that they sang, until we were overtaken by sleep. I don't think Florry's name was once mentioned, but Percival alluded to her indirectly every now and again, and from some hints which he let fall I gathered that he had not yet given up all hope. Very likely he had meant to renounce her for ever when he left Cannes ; but upon more deliberate reflection he may have found that it was in his heart to forgive her, and may also have argued, from what he knew of her character, that she would

be sure to want him back as soon as he was well out of reach.

We had more than a week of magnificent warm days and clear frosty nights; but then the weather suddenly changed, and the rain began to come down as it only knows how to come down in the mountains. Neither Percival nor I wanted to give the thing up without having fired a single shot at a bear; but we could not manage to keep the water out of our tent, and there was no other shelter within reach, except a wretched little hut about four feet high, used in summer by the Spanish shepherds, so we agreed to take advantage of this opportunity to cross into France and get newspapers and letters.

We had a long, toilsome trudge across the snow, and did not reach Luchon until it was too late to think of anything but bed; but the next day we went to the post-office, where a large bundle of letters was delivered to each of us.

Percival glanced hastily at his, and then flung them down with a muttered oath. Obviously he was disappointed for some reason or other ; but it did not occur to me until afterwards that he might have cherished a wild hope of finding a communication from Florry among them. I was more favoured. My budget contained two letters bearing the Cannes postmark, and the first of these I read aloud to Percival as we walked away—not on account of its intrinsic interest, which was small, but because I thought it as well to lose no occasion of convincing him that my relations with Florry were of a most correct and cousinly kind. But when I proceeded to open the second I was obliged to be seized with a terrific fit of coughing, for the very first words that caught my eye were, ‘You may congratulate me, if you like, on my engagement to Mr. Lacy.’ Here was a nice piece of business ! I stuffed the fatal missive into my pocket, and slipped

away as soon as I could, to finish it in private. There was no mistake about it. The horrid little woman had really gone and engaged herself to Lacy, and, with her usual want of consideration, had left me the agreeable task of announcing the news to Percival. 'Love to Carrots,' she added in a postscript. 'I hope he is enjoying himself, and that he won't receive too warm a hug from one of his kindred bears.'

I haven't the least doubt that when she wrote those words there was a malicious grin on her face, and that she flattered herself she had paid Carrots off that time. But if she imagined that I should carry this epistolary slap in the face to its destination, she was sadly mistaken in me. 'No, indeed,' I thought; 'I am not going to expose myself to the risk of being eaten up alive to please anybody;' and I determined that Percival's sport should not be spoilt by any unwelcome communication from me.

The unlucky part of it was that I had aroused his suspicions by letting him hear the contents of the first letter, and stopping so suddenly upon the point of reading him the second ; and all that day and the next, when we set out to return to our encampment, he went on bothering me about it. What had Miss Neville said in that other letter of hers? Why was I so confoundedly mysterious? Had she mentioned him?—and so forth. I could only return feeble and evasive replies, which of course did not satisfy him. He tried wheedling me and he tried bullying me, but he might just as well have talked to a stone wall. The secret, I resolved, should only be dragged from me with my life ; and at last he gave it up and subsided into a state of silent and subdued ferocity which made me exceedingly uncomfortable.

But when we reached our camp there was good news for us ; and Percival came out of the



sulks on hearing that the tracks of a whole bear family—father, mother, and two cubs—had been seen on the freshly fallen snow not a couple of miles away. The guides had already arranged our plan of action for the morrow, and pretended, as those fellows always do, to be so intimately acquainted with the habits of bears in general as to know to a nicety what their programme would be too. Paterfamilias, we were informed, would start with break of day for the higher pastures above the village of El Plan, whither some Spanish shepherds were known to have taken their flocks. The mother and cubs would probably remain either among or above the pine woods which clothed the southern side of our valley. Now, if the south wind held, what we had to do was simple enough. We had only to mount the opposite slopes towards the spot where the tracks had been seen, and there was little danger of our mounting so high as to place ourselves between

the wind and our game. It was further considered advisable that we should separate into two parties, one of which should have for its object the destruction of Mr. Bruin, while the other should account for Mrs. B. and the children. This arrangement was not agreed to without some discussion and alternative suggestions, for Percival always hated to do as he was told; but it was the one finally adopted; and when the morning broke soft and cloudy, with a light breeze blowing in our faces, Percival and his party set off to the westward in the direction of El Plan, I and mine heading for the pine woods immediately facing us.

‘That ought to give you the best chance, Oliver,’ said my friend generously as we parted.

I don’t know when I have passed a more thoroughly comfortless hour than that we spent in clambering up through those dense woods. The mountain-side was very precipitous; we had to advance as gingerly as possible, so

as to avoid making any noise, and whenever I slipped or trod on a dry twig, Jean-Pierre, the chasseur who was in command of me, turned round, making hideous faces, and cursed me under his breath. Furthermore, I couldn't help thinking that if the bear chose to appear suddenly at this stage of the proceedings it would be an awkward business for all of us.

We encountered no bear in the woods; but when at length we rose above the region of trees and emerged upon a stretch of coarse grass, we were rewarded for our climb by discovering traces which there was no mistaking upon a patch of the fast-melting snow. Following these up hopefully, we soon found ourselves upon the edge of a tolerably extensive snow-field, across which the tracks were so distinct that Jean-Pierre declared that they were not an hour old. He further professed to be able to see that the beast had been moving upwards at a leisurely pace, having no

suspicion of being pursued, and prophesied that we should catch him up on some cliffs to which he pointed, and which he calculated that it would take us something like an hour to reach.

I was very glad when we did reach them, for toiling up hill through soft snow is not my notion of enjoyment; but I was not particularly sanguine as to the chance of Bruin's having had the civility to wait for us, and, once upon the bare rocks, we had no longer any clue to guide us to his whereabouts. Jean-Pierre, nevertheless, continued to be full of confidence. He went on ahead, skirting the face of the precipice, where there was just foothold and no more, and the rest of us followed. After a time he held up his hand to stop us, bent down and examined the rock where a slight sprinkling of snow had lodged, advanced a little way, came back again, and then, pointing to a deep cleft just in front of us, exclaimed, 'Il est là!'

I was at once posted at the entrance of this fissure, and warned—in order to steady my nerves, I suppose—that if I missed I was a dead man ; after which a stone was thrown in. No result. A second and a larger one, however, elicited a deep gr-r-r, which put an end to all doubt.

‘ Attention, m’sieur, s’il vous plait ! ’ sang out Jean-Pierre, and he fired into the chasm.

Immediately a large dark mass hurled itself out through the smoke. I suppose I must have taken aim, though I can’t say that I have any recollection of doing so, for the next instant a fine large bear lay stone-dead at my feet.

Well, I dare say we kicked up rather more row over it than we need have done (Percival declared afterwards that he could have heard us yelling ten miles away) ; but I think perhaps it might count as an extenuating circumstance that this was my first bear. As for the

natives, of course they ought to have known better.

So far, everything had gone quite according to programme, except that it was the old he-bear, not his partner, that I had killed; but now came the question of whether we were to rest satisfied with what we had accomplished and return to camp, or whether we should push on and try to effect a junction with Percival. After some debate it was agreed that Jean-Pierre and I should adopt the latter course. I quite admit that this was all wrong; but I was flushed with success, and I thought, supposing that Percival should happen to miss, what a thousand pities it would be that there should not be somebody at hand to back him up. So we set our faces westwards and downwards, and in due course of time reached the outskirts of the woods where we supposed that our companions would be.

I don't think we had been five minutes off

the snow when I heard something crashing among the trees beneath us. I caught a momentary glimpse of a great lumbering body, and directly afterwards I distinctly saw a half-grown cub dashing helter-skelter after it. I fired almost at random, and I need hardly add that I missed. The crashing sound grew fainter and fainter, and then I looked at Jean-Pierre and Jean-Pierre looked at me, and then we both whistled.

Well might we whistle! I prefer to draw a veil over our meeting with Percival, which speedily ensued. I could not say much. My behaviour had certainly been bad enough to provoke anybody, and 'd—d unsportsman-like' was perhaps not too severe a description to give of it; still I don't think he would have been quite so infuriated had I not been compelled to acknowledge that I had not only robbed him of his share of the day's sport, but had previously been quite successful in securing

my own. When he heard that, his indignation knew no bounds. He swore the whole thing had been done on purpose; he vowed he would never go out with me again so long as he lived; he stamped and danced about, and I must say made a great fool of himself. I am quite sure that if I had conducted myself after that fashion everybody present would simply have roared with laughter; but none of us laughed at Percival. The fact is that there was something rather terrible about the man, though I don't know that I could exactly say in what it consisted.

At length his fury spent itself, and we set off sadly and solemnly to return to the valley, Jean-Pierre and I hanging our heads like naughty boys, the rest of the Jeans and Pierres and Jean-Pierres slouching after us with somewhat scared faces, and Percival striding along by himself in deep dudgeon.

The day was not to end without another



breeze. In the course of the afternoon it was suddenly discovered that we were out of everything. There was no tea left, no bread, and not a drop of wine. Why these deficiencies had not been mentioned to us before we set out for Luchon, where we could easily have laid in a fresh stock of provisions, I don't know; but Jean said he thought Pierre had told us, and Pierre thought Jean had spoken, and Jean-Pierre had not considered it his business to interfere; and so there was a good all-round wrangle, in the midst of which Percival worked himself up into one of his paroxysms. All that was necessary was that one man should be sent down to Venasque, the nearest Spanish town, to get what we required; but this would not satisfy him. He declared that every one of them should go, and that they should walk all night, so as to be back before our breakfast hour in the morning.

‘Allez-vous-en, the whole lot of you!’ he

shouted. 'Entendez-vous?—je veux être seul. Take yourselves off, you lazy, garlic-eating devils, and let's have a little peace for one night.'

The whole troop marched away without much protestation. I dare say they were not sorry to escape from this raving Englishman. Afterwards I wondered whether Percival had had a deliberate design in his mind when he dismissed them ; but, looking back upon it all, I am inclined to think that he had not, and that what followed was the result of mere accident and opportunity.

He was quiet enough, though portentously gloomy, until the time came for us to partake of our evening meal. We had to collect the wood for our bonfire ourselves, and we had to cook our soup ourselves, and a nice mess we made of it. All this was sufficiently uncomfortable, and did not serve to improve my friend's temper ; but the worst was to come.

Being without wine, we were obliged to fall back upon brandy-and-water for our drink, and I noticed with some uneasiness that Percival was making no use of the water at all. At last I rather foolishly ventured upon a gentle remonstrance, whereupon he promptly filled his glass with raw brandy, and tossed it off at a draught.

‘You’re a devilish hard fellow to please, Oliver, I must say,’ he remarked. ‘One would have thought you’d have been satisfied with spoiling my sport, and not wanted to spoil my dinner into the bargain. Deuce take it all, man, you don’t suppose I’m going to let you tell me what I’m to drink, do you?’

The upshot of it was that by the time that we turned in he was anything but sober, though he was able to keep his legs and to talk without knocking his words together.

‘Got your revolver?’ he called out, just as I was dropping off to sleep.

We thought it as well to have revolvers always handy, for we had heard no very good report of the sparse inhabitants of those valleys.

‘Oh yes; all right,’ I replied. ‘Good-night.’ And I rolled over on my side.

But I had hardly closed my eyes before he disturbed me again by asking suddenly: ‘I say, Oliver, did you ever fight a duel?’

‘Fight a duel?’ I repeated drowsily. ‘No, never; did you?’

‘No,’ he answered in a cool, casual sort of tone; ‘but I don’t see why I shouldn’t fight one now. I think I will.’

That woke me up. ‘What are you talking about?’ I exclaimed. ‘Who are you going to fight with here?’

‘Why, with you, of course,’ said he. ‘I’m not afraid. Now then—mind yourself.’ And without more ado he suited the action to the word.

A flash, a loud report, and the whistling of a bullet past my ear brought me to a realising sense of the pleasant position that I was in. I was out of that tent and behind the biggest rock that I could find before you could have said 'Knife!' My nimbleness astonished myself. Mercifully there was no moon, and the red glare of our camp fire only served to make the shadows blacker.

Percival blundered out after me, cursing and swearing. 'Stand up, you skulking devil!' he roared. 'Why don't you stand up and fight like a man?' And bang went another barrel.

'Now this time,' said he, with tipsy solemnity, 'I'm going to take a careful aim and hit you. Oh, I see you, you beggar!—don't you flatter yourself that you're invisible.'

The worst of it was that I was by no means sure that he didn't see me. He advanced with slow, unsteady steps, and began prowling round my rock, while I, crouching

upon all fours, dodged him by a succession of noiseless hops, like a huge toad. Bang ! bang ! went two more barrels. 'That makes four,' thinks I. Whether he saw me or not, I saw him plainly enough, and I had my own loaded revolver in my hand all the time. I don't think I ever felt more tempted to shoot a man in my life. Fortunately he let off his last two barrels before the temptation became too strong for me. One of the bullets passed over my head, and I heard the other strike the ground beside me. Then I rose erect, feeling myself master of the situation.

'Now, Percival,' I said, 'I could shoot you six times over, if I chose ; but of course I shall do nothing of the kind. Go and lie down. You're very drunk, you know, and——'

'That's a lie !' he interrupted.

'Very well. Lie down and go to sleep, anyhow. Perhaps you'll have the grace to beg my pardon to-morrow morning.'

He growled and blustered a good deal ; but eventually he did return to the tent, and threw himself down. I then proceeded to take certain precautionary measures ; after which I, too, stretched myself on the ground. But no sooner had I done so than up the brute jumped again.

‘No good trying to sleep,’ he said ; ‘slow work sleeping. Let’s have another duel. Where’s the cartridges?’

‘Every single cartridge that we possess is safe at the bottom of the stream,’ answered I, with a chuckle ; for I had just had time to anticipate that danger. I cared very little for his curses and threats, knowing that, if the worst came to the worst, I had it in my power to disable him ; and I suppose he was sober enough to understand that too, for he desisted after a time, and apparently went off to sleep at last. I don’t think I was many minutes in following his example. I wonder now at my temerity ; but the fact was I was so dead tired

---

that it was as much as I could do to hold my eyes open until he began to snore ; and, besides, I didn't see that he could do me any harm, now that I was possessed of the one effective firearm that remained to us.

That only shows what an ass I was. The next thing of which I was conscious was that Percival was standing over me in the grey light of the dawn with my revolver in his hand. 'And now, Master Oliver,' said he, 'I think I've pretty well turned the tables upon you.'

Indeed he had ! I gave myself up for lost, and I hope I may never again feel as frightened as I did at that moment. But Percival burst out laughing.

'You stupid old fool !' he said quite amiably ; 'do you take me for a murderer ? It was all a joke, my firing at you last night. I only wanted to scare you, and I was no more drunk than you are.'



I didn't in the least believe him; but it seemed more polite to pretend to do so.

'Come along up the hills and see the sunrise,' he went on. 'A breath of fresh air will do us both good.'

I demurred to this proposition, alleging, what was perfectly true, that I hadn't had half my fair share of sleep; but I added politely that I hoped he wouldn't let me prevent him from climbing to any height that he pleased.

'Confound you!' he exclaimed angrily, 'I believe you're in a funk of me. Look here, then.' He caught me by the arm, dragged me rather roughly out of the tent, and, flinging my revolver into the torrent, 'Will that satisfy you?' he asked.

It was a pretty cool way of disposing of my property; but then, to be sure, I had drowned his cartridges. The end of it was that I had to go with him. Anything for peace, I thought; and I reflected with comfort that the guides

would be back in the course of a few hours, after which my final farewell to this red-haired ruffian should very soon be spoken.

Percival led the way across to the northern side of our narrow valley, and we were soon scrambling up over boulders and slippery shale at a great pace, he whistling and singing, apparently in the highest spirits, and I silent, sulky, and out of breath. From time to time I suggested that we had mounted high enough; but he always replied briskly, 'Oh dear, no! we shall have to do another five hundred feet at least before we can get anything of a view, and there's heaps of time.' And then he went on sniggering to himself, as though at some first-rate joke.

It was horridly unpleasant. I was beginning to have a very strong suspicion that the man was off his head. Drunk he was not; for he never made a false step, and we had already passed some places which demanded a steady

head ; but his manner was decidedly odd, and, when he turned to speak to me, I saw a light in his eyes which I didn't like. I suppose it must have taken us the best part of two hours to reach the edge of the glacier which sloped upwards towards the summit of the ridge that separated us from France. By that time the sun had caught the higher peaks and the fleecy clouds around and below them ; and I dare say the spectacle was a very exquisite one. Some people, I know, go into raptures over a sunrise ; but I am not one of those people. I always loathe everything until I have had my breakfast ; and the circumstances of this particular occasion were such that the snow and the sky might have clothed themselves in all the colours of the rainbow, with a hundred and fifty intermediate tints to boot, and have left me perfectly unmoved.

One thing I was quite determined about : I didn't mean to skip over hidden crevasses at

the heels of a maniac; and, to show how determined I was, I sat me down doggedly on a rock, and observed: 'That's enough for me. Not a step farther do I go.'

'Just as you like,' answered Percival, with more suavity than I had expected of him. 'Oliver, old chap,' he continued, seating himself close beside me, and assuming an extremely friendly and confidential tone, 'I want you to tell me something. It's of no great consequence; but I've a fancy to know. What did Miss Neville say to you in that last letter of hers?'

Perhaps it would have been wiser to tell him the truth, or a part of the truth; but I was cold and hungry and cross, and to have this tiresome subject reopened just when I was beginning to hope that the moment of my release was at hand was too much for me.

'Oh, bother!' I exclaimed. 'I can't tell you all she said, and if I could I wouldn't. I never show my letters.'

‘You read me her first one,’ retorted Percival.

‘Yes : and a precious fool I was to do it. If you want to hear about her, you had better write to her yourself ; I can’t undertake the duties of a go-between.’

Percival began to frown and glare. ‘Now, I’ll tell you what it is, Oliver,’ he said ; ‘I mean to have this out of you by fair means or by foul. You had better make up your mind to that.’

Nobody can say that, in all my previous wrangles with Percival, I had not been forbearance itself ; but there is a point at which, like the traditional worm, I turn ; and that point he had now reached. I refused point-blank to give him the information he asked for, and couched my refusal in forcible terms.

The next minute I was lying upon my face, and Percival, kneeling on the small of my back, was tying my arms tightly behind me

with a silk handkerchief. The fellow was as strong as Samson, and I, as I have said before, am but a wee man. Successful resistance was hopeless ; but I let out with my feet to the best of my ability, and had the pleasure of catching him one on the shin which I don't think he could have liked. He made no complaint, however, but quietly finished his operation, picked me up under his arm like a feather, and carried me, struggling and helpless, upwards. 'You'd better keep still, unless you want to kill us both,' was all that he said ; and indeed I thought it as well to take his advice. How on earth he managed to scramble up the face of those rocks with a man under his arm is more than I can explain ; but he did it (not without bumping and scraping me considerably, though) ; and after a bit we came to a narrow ledge. There he deposited me, and, descending rapidly some ten or twelve feet, contemplated me with a sigh of satisfaction.

‘Now, my boy,’ said he, ‘you stay there till you have answered my question.’

‘Then I shall stay here for the rest of my life,’ I returned.

I suppose no man was ever placed in a more ridiculous position. To give in would have been too humiliating : to descend from my perch without the use of my hands was out of the question, and to get my hands free seemed scarcely less so. Of course, however, I made a vigorous attempt. I tugged, I strained, I twisted and contorted myself in every possible way, while he stood below and laughed at me ; but it was all in vain, and the only result of my writhing was that a lot of things rolled out of my pocket, among which was the very letter over which we had been fighting. Percival put his foot upon it just in time to save it from fluttering away before the wind.

‘It strikes me that I can find out as much as I want now without your help,’ said he, holding up his prize triumphantly.

‘Very well,’ I said. ‘Come here and untie me, then.’

But he shook his empty head sagaciously. ‘Not so fast, my good friend. I suspect you of treachery. Either you are engaged to your cousin, or you have been telling her things about me which you don’t want me to know of. We’ll just see about that before we release you.’

Percival was a gentleman by birth and bringing-up, and perhaps, when it came to the point, he did not altogether enjoy the sensation of looking at a letter addressed to another man. He stood for some few minutes with his back turned towards me, gazing abstractedly at the sunny mountain-tops opposite, and tapping his chin with the envelope. At length he turned round, and called out—

‘I’ll give you another chance. For the last time, will you tell me what is in this letter?’

‘No,’ I shouted back resolutely, ‘I won’t! Read it, if you don’t mind behaving like a cad ;



and when you have quite done, perhaps you will be so good as to step up here and unloose me.'

He made no reply, but stood thoughtfully tapping his chin with the letter, as before, and finally moved slowly away downhill. For a minute or two I heard the sound of his footsteps; then, every now and again, the clatter of dislodged stones, which showed me that he was still descending; then came profound silence. Uncomfortable as my position was, I was by no means impatient for his return. It was quite on the cards that, in the first access of frenzy which a perusal of Florry's cruel postscript might be expected to arouse, he might come tearing back and let off steam by flinging me over the precipice; and the longer he took to think about it the better, I felt, would be my chance of escaping with a whole skin and unbroken bones. But when a very long time had elapsed, and the sun had risen high into the heavens, and there was neither

sound nor sign of Percival, I began to grow seriously uneasy. Could it be possible that the miscreant had meant to leave me there to perish miserably? Eventually I put my pride in my pocket, and shouted. The only answer that came to me was a succession of mocking echoes of my own voice—ahoy!—hoy!—hoy!—fainter and fainter, as the cliffs tossed it to and fro. Then I made more desperate and vain efforts to free myself. Then I peered over the brink of my ledge, and convinced myself that it would be madness to attempt to scramble down. Then I tried to fray through the silk handkerchief that bound me by rubbing it against the rock; but I was too tightly secured to move my arms to any purpose, and my muscles were so strained that every movement was an agony.

I don't know how long I fretted and fumed on that narrow shelf, parched with thirst, in considerable pain, and—I frankly confess—in

a mortal fright; but I afterwards calculated that I must have been there quite three hours before I resolved in despair to take my chance of scrambling down without assistance. I wriggled over the edge, got one foot firm into a crevice, cautiously lowered the other, and then, as might have been expected, down I went, head over heels into space. There was a tremendous crash, and that is all that I remember about it.

When I came to myself, I was lying on a grassy slope, with Jean-Pierre pouring brandy down my throat, and an assemblage of white-faced Pierres and Jeans kneeling round me. I was pretty well knocked about; but I was not broken anywhere, and Jean-Pierre began to praise the saints loudly when I sat up and asked for some water.

‘You gave us a fine fright, monsieur,’ he said. ‘A pretty thing it would have been for us if we had had to go back to France and say that both our gentlemen were killed!’

‘*Both!*’ I ejaculated. ‘You don’t mean to say that Mr. Percival is dead!’

‘*Mon Dieu!* monsieur,’ returned Jean-Pierre in a tone of gentle remonstrance, ‘how would you have a man drop down a sheer three hundred feet upon his head, and remain alive?’

Whether it was accident or design that brought about poor Percival’s death, I cannot, of course, say. That he was not accountable for his actions on that last morning of his life I am quite convinced. I had to give some explanation to the guides of the circumstance that I had been found with my arms tied behind me, and I did so by telling them that my unfortunate friend had gone out of his mind before treating me in that way. This I firmly believe to have been the truth; and they agreed with me that he had for some time past been more mad than sane. They further concurred in my opinion that it could do no possible good, and would probably only

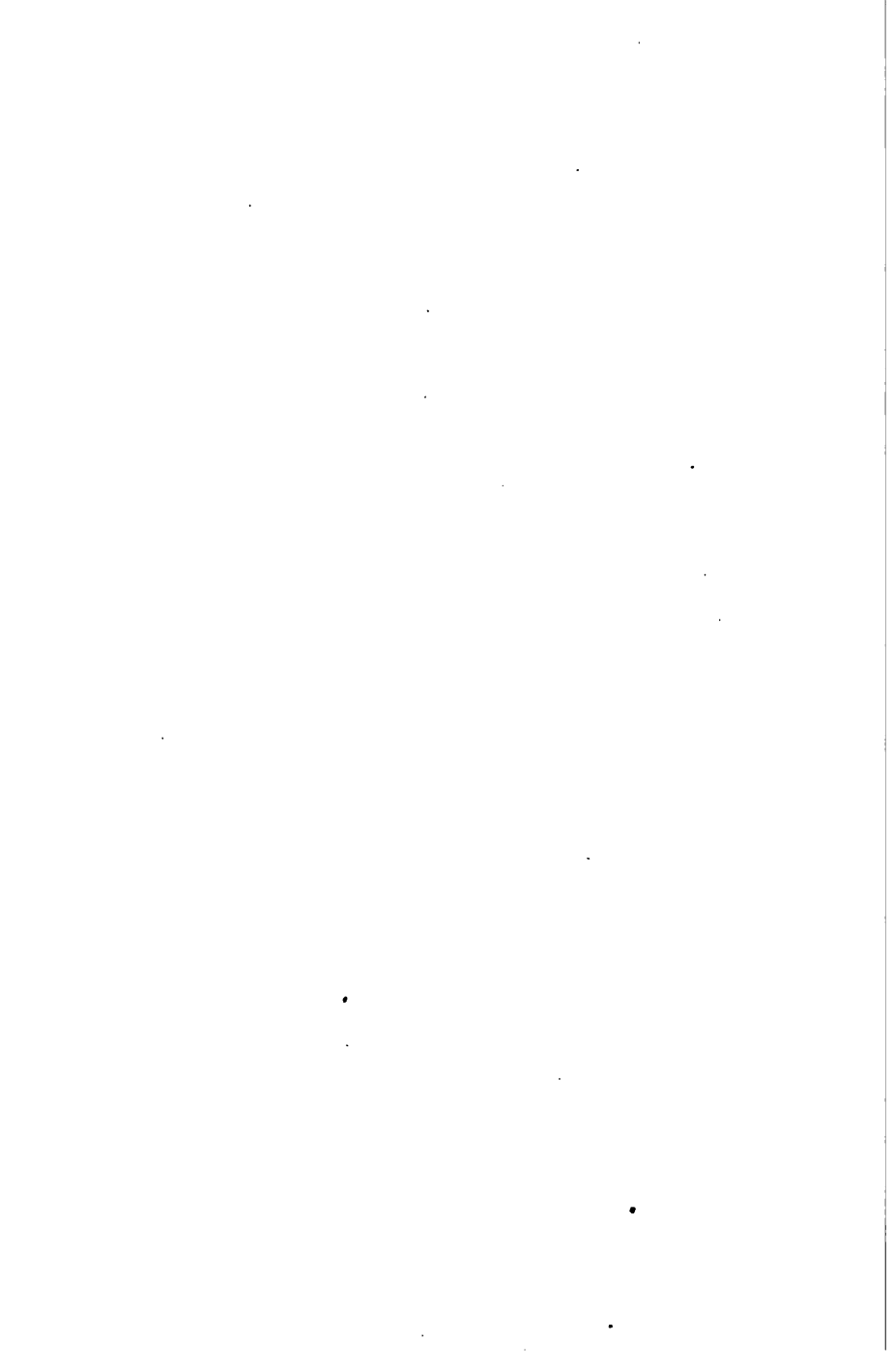
cause troublesome complications, to make all the facts known to the authorities. Luckily for us, the authorities were less troublesome than an English coroner's jury would have been, and it was neither supposed nor suggested that my own fall had been due to any other causes than the inexperience and foolhardiness which, as I was told, had proved fatal to my companion.

When I next saw Mrs. Lacy—which was rather more than a year afterwards—she expressed a great deal of concern at the fate of the hapless man with the red hair, and was eager for fuller particulars than she had as yet been able to obtain. I gratified her curiosity as well as I could, and dwelt a good deal upon Percival's recklessness; but I did not think it necessary to say anything about the letter, which we had no small difficulty in forcing out of his stiffened fingers when his body was carried back to the camp.

NILS JENSEN

VOL. II.

D



## *NILS JENSEN*

### I.

NILS JENSEN lay on the flat of his back on the hillside, with his hands locked behind his head, his long pipe dangling from the corner of his mouth, and his eyes fixed upon the cloudless sky, which was scarcely bluer than they. A circle of solemn little whiteheaded children squatted round him, listening intently to the story which he was relating, in a leisurely manner, between the whiffs of his pipe—his full, deep voice rising and falling in a pleasant, musical cadence, through the summer stillness. Beneath the little group lay the village of Bakke, with its toy-like wooden houses, its tiny landlocked harbour,



and its small fleet of fishing-boats ; and beyond that, the broad Hardanger Fjord stretched away, calm and blue, like a great lake, to meet the opposite shore, where a glorious confused mass of purple mountains, snow-crowned and basking in the warm sunlight, shut in the view. It was a magnificent summer day—such a day as is not too common on the rainy west coast of Norway, and Nils was enjoying it in his own manner.

‘ And so, you see,’ said he, concluding his narrative, ‘ because the man was an honest man, and had done what was right, the good spirits gave him contentment and a light heart, which are better things than money and lands, as you will find out one of these days, if you live long enough ; and the bad spirits left him, and fled away, moaning as they went, to the dark, black place in the narrow fjord from which they had come, where the rocks rise so high on either side that the blessed sunshine

never touches the water, and where it is deep, deep—so deep that nobody has ever found the bottom. And the spirits plunged down under the waters; and there they must sit for another hundred years in darkness because they tempted a good man, and failed. But the good spirits, who had done their work, and gained the battle, spread their great white wings, and flew away rejoicing to the highest mountain-tops, where they rest in their beautiful ice-palace above the clouds, and listen to music so enchanting that the organ in church is a mere nothing to it, and ——’

‘ But, Nils,’ interrupted a practical member of the audience, who had probably had some six winters’ experience of the effects of ice and snow upon the human extremities, ‘ isn’t it very cold up there? ’

‘ Not a bit of it,’ replied the unabashed narrator—‘ not for them, at least. Spirits don’t mind the cold. And then what a palace they

have got there underneath the ice! Such pillars and ceilings, and floors, and glittering thrones! You cannot even guess what it is like! But one of these days, when you are a big boy, I will take you up with me to the glacier, and we will peep down into one of the great blue rifts where the icicles hang, and where you can get a glimpse—but only a glimpse—of what is beyond. You can't go down there, or hear the music that the spirits hear, or see the things that they see; but, if you grow up a good man, you will know all about it when you die; for then the spirits will come down for you, and take you up in their arms, and in a moment you will be across the fjord, and high up among the mountains, and then——'

'Nils, Nils!' broke in a grave voice from the background, 'what nonsense is this that you are putting into the children's heads?'

Nils started into a sitting posture, and saw

between him and the sunlight a quaint, old-world figure, clad in a long black gown and an Elizabethan ruff—the clergyman of Bakke, in fact, in the prescribed costume of his order. He scrambled to his feet, took off his hat, and scratched his head a little sheepishly.

‘Children will always be getting into mischief, unless they are amused,’ he remarked in a deprecating tone.

‘Or unless they are at school, where they ought to be now. Come, children, run away to your lessons, or you will be late, and then what will the schoolmaster say to you? And, Nils, I think you might find a better use for your time than to bewilder these little ones with stories which they must sooner or later find out to be untrue.’

Nils was silent for a few seconds, gazing somewhat ruefully after his dispersed flock, which was racing down the grass slopes towards the village. Then he turned his

dreamy blue eyes upon the honest square face of his interlocutor, and said—

‘ Fairy-tales are not quite untrue—that is, there is more truth than falsehood in them. You must make truth pleasant to a child, or he will not care to understand it. If I tell him that beasts and birds talk together, what is the harm? It is not true, you say; and perhaps it is not—though that is a question which has never been decided, and never will be—but what is the child the worse for it? It may make him kinder to animals, and more careful of them——’

‘ Yes, yes,’ interrupted the priest, a little impatiently; ‘ that is all very well; but fairy tales are one thing, and religion is another; and we must be careful not to confuse them, my good Nils, lest we do wrong without intending it. And, after all, these tales are best kept for the winter time, when there is less work to be done. You will never make

your living, Nils, if you spend your days lying on the grass and inventing idle stories to amuse children.'

This sounded rather hard upon Nils, who could and did get through as much work as any man in the country; but then, to be sure, the work he did was generally that which ought to have been done by other people, and was therefore not of a remunerative kind; so that there was some justification for the priest's prediction.

Nils Jensen was probably the most shifty and helpful creature in the whole Hardanger district, as he assuredly was the least selfish. From the shoeing of a horse to the stringing of a fiddle, from the doctoring of a sick cow to the mending of a net, there was nothing within the limited range of the requirements of the inhabitants of Bakke that he could not do, and do well. He could fell timber with the best; he could build a shed; he could tinker up

a leaking boat; he could cure a smoking chimney; and many other less every-day accomplishments than these were his. Also his neighbours, recognising in him the rare combination of first-rate capacity with willingness to devote the same to the service of others, were not slow to take advantage thereof. If any one among them wanted the help of a strong pair of arms in his hay-field, or in the gathering in of his scanty rye-crop, or if he had a horse requiring medical treatment, or a gate that would not hang rightly on its hinges, or a lock out of repair, he never thought twice about what he should do, but called one of his children, and said—

‘Run as fast as thou canst up to old Christian Jensen’s, and tell Nils he is wanted immediately.’

And Nils seldom failed to respond to the appeal. He would perform the service required of him, whether it entailed the work of a few

minutes or of the whole day, with the same placid cheerfulness, and the same perfect unconsciousness that he was doing anything out of the way, or specially deserving of gratitude. So little, indeed, did he expect to be thanked for his pains that his friends, falling in with his humour, as often as not neglected to go through that little formality. They were not, however, altogether ungrateful. Wherever Nils was known—and he was known many miles away from Bakke—he was loved; and that was a reward to which he was more sensible than to any form of thanks, whether spoken or acted. He was respected, too, as being a young man of exceptional literary attainments—a young man as well read as the schoolmaster, or perhaps even the clergyman himself; though, mingled with this respect, there may have been a faint under-current of that half-conscious contempt which would appear to be the natural human sentiment



towards all unselfish and unbusinesslike men, and which is discoverable among the secluded valleys of Norway as well as in less remote regions.

The son of a farmer, who might be considered almost well-to-do in that poverty-stricken land, Nils had the more leisure to attend to his neighbours' affairs through being exempt from actual pressing necessity of looking after his own. He had his bed and board in the red wooden farmhouse where he lived with his father and his brothers; and, as he often said to those who reproved him for not making more money, what more can a man want than a roof to cover him, clothes to wear, and food to eat? He did his share of the farm work; but that was not much, for his elder brothers, Christian and Frants, were strong and healthy, and did not entirely share in his philanthropic views, holding a deeply rooted though inarticulate belief in the maxim that charity begins at

home. They were very fond of Nils, these honest young men ; but they, as well as their father, regarded him as an abnormal being, incomprehensible to ordinary intelligences, and looked upon his example as one rather to be admired than to be imitated. His ideas, his tastes, his pursuits were in every respect at variance with theirs. He was the best rifle-shot in the whole neighbourhood, yet he never cared to measure his skill against that of another marksman ; he never got drunk—no, not even at a wedding, and actually went so far as to contend that there was no real enjoyment to be got out of liquor—which was absurd upon the face of it. Then he took a strange and perverse pleasure in long objectless wanderings among the snows and glaciers of the Folge-fond, whereby nothing on earth was to be gained, except the risk of a broken neck ; and would pass hours in sailing aimlessly about, up and down the fjord, neither fishing nor

shooting wild-duck, nor engaged in any sensible or profitable pursuit, but simply dreaming. These things were a puzzle to the Jensen family, who, however, pardoned such vagaries in consideration of Nils' usefulness and kind-heartedness, of his excellent playing upon the fiddle, and of the capital stories which he invented, or got out of his books, and related to them during the long dark winter days, while he sat over the fire, working at his wood-carving. For Nils was a proficient in this latter branch of industry, and got a good price for his productions from the Bergen dealers—which winnings, alas! he usually gave away very soon after he had received them. This, again, was an incomprehensible procedure to his relatives, who very reasonably asked what was the use of earning money if you didn't mean to keep it.

Now all this was very well, and Nils' mode of life, being fashioned upon his own peculiar

views, might have been the best possible for him, but for one unlucky circumstance—Nils was in love. For several years he had been the devoted slave of Dorothea (or, as she was more usually called, Dorthé) Aandahl, the daughter of the one general-shop keeper of Bakke, and the recognised beauty of the neighbourhood. Nils worshipped this little fair-haired, blue-eyed maiden with all the fervour of a romantic nature, believing her to be the best and noblest, as she was obviously the most beautiful, girl in all Norway, and mentally endowing her with many qualities which she not only did not possess, but would not even have understood the meaning of, if they had been mentioned to her. She was, in truth, a good, well-meaning little soul, not wholly unconscious of her pretty face, yet not unduly vain thereof, and sincerely attached to Nils, whom she admired without having very much in common with him. They were betrothed

with the consent of the parents on both sides; but there was no immediate prospect of their becoming man and wife, Nils' father—a shrewd old person—having declined in the most unequivocal manner to burden himself with the support of a third generation of Jensens, and Nils' own resources being wholly inadequate to the maintenance of a household. But this uncertainty as to the future gave Nils very little disquietude. He had no doubt but that, some day or other, his marriage would take place; and in the meantime he was satisfied with being allowed to adore his idol, before whom he bowed down with as much reverence as any devout Catholic before his patron saint, loading her with votive-offerings in the shape of bear-skins and fox-skins, the spoil of his rifle, with wood-carvings, the product of many a winter day's work, with quaint silver ornaments from Bergen, and with I know not what other treasures picked up here and there in the

course of his circumscribed wanderings. He wrote verses, too, in her honour, and composed long histories, for the delectation of the neighbours during the idle season of the year, in which the heroine always had fair hair and blue eyes, and invariably bore the name of Dorthe.

But if such philandering contented the romantic Nils, there were other more practical people to whom it appeared the height of folly and shortsightedness, and who often felt it their duty to point out to the patient lover that this way of going on could not last for ever, and that a man who proposed to take unto himself a wife had best be setting about making ready a home for her, instead of spending his money and his labour upon those with whom he had no blood-relationship at all. Advice of this description usually caused Nils to scratch his head and ponder for a time; for really there did seem to be a good deal of sound

sense in it; and the customary effect was produced by the warning words of the priest recorded above. But, after a minute or two, Nils, recollecting that he had promised to sail across the fjord to Utne, with Hans Lundgren, who was old and rheumatic, and no longer able to manage his boat single-handed, dismissed the subject from his mind, and set off to run down to the port as fast as his legs could carry him.

Some children, playing in the street, caught sight of him as he passed, and gave chase, calling out 'Nils! Nils!' but he shook his head and waved his hand, and never paused till he had reached the sandy shore, where a few fishing-craft were drawn up. There, sitting in one of the boats, and mending a net, he found an old man, the sight, of whom would have gladdened an artist's eye, so very old was he—so wrinkled, so dirty, and so picturesque. He wore woollen stockings and knee-breeches, and a blue-jacket, which was patched and

ancient, but which boasted of real silver buttons. On his head he had a scarlet nightcap, and his silvery hair was combed forward into two long locks, which hung down beside his withered cheeks. He looked up, as Nils approached, and said, in a querulous piping voice—

‘Oh, you have come, then?’

‘Yes,’ said Nils, jumping into the boat as he shoved it off. ‘I am sorry to have kept you waiting, Hans.’

‘Oh, as for that, I am accustomed to be kept waiting,’ grumbled the other; ‘nobody thinks of hurrying himself for old Hans. You said half-past eleven, and it is now past noon; but there! you are all the same! Yourselves first and the old folks afterwards—that is your way. In my young days it was different; we used to respect age then.’

For, indeed, he was a very cross-grained old man, suffering much from lumbago and poverty, and other evils. ‘Yes,’ he continued,



‘it was different then; but maybe you young folks are right, and there is no use in taking care of old people. They ought to be sent out of the world when they can’t work any more. I wish it would please God to take me, I know; I am tired enough of it all. Labour, and pain, and want—want, and pain, and labour! at eighty years of age a man has had more than his share of it.’

‘Come, come, Father Hans,’ said Nils, who had hoisted the square brown sail and taken the tiller in his hand, ‘you must not talk so on such a fine day as this. Haven’t we got the good sunshine to warm us, and the fresh air to give us an appetite, and a fair wind? Now this is what I call a very good world to live in. Why, it would have been worth while to come into it only to see those mountains. And I shouldn’t wonder,’ added Nils, diving into one of the capacious pockets of his frieze coat, and producing a small wooden box—‘I shouldn’t

wonder if I had a pinch of snuff about me.'

'What do young fellows like you want with snuff?' growled the old man, somewhat mollified. 'Give me the box—so! H'm! that is good snuff—excellent snuff! Where did you get it, my boy?'

'I bought it at Bergen,' answered Nils. 'I am glad you like it.'

'Ah, it is well for such as you to praise the world,' sighed the old man, with an envious glance at Nils' powerful, well-knit frame and healthy, brown cheeks; 'but what good is sunshine to me? It doesn't warm me. And as for an appetite, God knows that is no blessing! And I can't see the mountains any more,' he added, raising his sunken, filmy eyes to the opposite shore.

'But the snuff is good,' pleaded Nils, the optimist.

'Yes, the snuff is not so bad. And you

are a good lad, Nils.' He rose slowly, and tottered away into the bows, muttering, 'A good lad! a good lad!' and, crouching down, feigned to go to sleep. Perhaps he was afraid Nils would ask to have the box back again.

He need not have felt any alarm on that score. A box of snuff for an old man, a toy for a child, a silk neckerchief for a young girl—why, a couple of days at wood-carving would more than pay for all these luxuries; and Nils was not the man to grudge two days' work to anybody. He contemplated the recumbent form of old Hans Lundgren, for a minute or two, with a satisfied smile, and then, leaning back, raised his eyes to his favourite mountains, all glistening and glittering in the midday sunlight, and soared away into dreamland, as his habit was.

The breeze fell light, and it took two good hours to make Utne; and, when there, there was a great deal to be done. Old Hans had to

see two of his grandchildren, who were established in the village, and Nils had some odd jobs to do for sundry acquaintances; so that it was late in the evening, though—for the season was just past midsummer—the sun was still high in the heavens, when the oddly assorted pair set out on their return voyage.

It was fine and warm when they started, but before they had accomplished two-thirds of the transit the weather was changing and changing with a rapidity which I hope and believe is peculiar to western Norway. Suddenly, without any warning at all, a mass of heavy clouds came sailing up from the seaward, a cold gust or two swirled past, ruffling the surface of the water, and Hans and Nils, making no remark upon so ordinary a phenomenon, quietly encased themselves in a couple of those stiff tarpaulin garments which are as essential a part of a Norwegian peasant's costume as his hat or his boots. Then came a few big rain-

drops, a longer, steadier blast, and Nils lowered the sail a little. A few minutes later the little boat was tossing and plunging amid green, white-crested waves; and sky, sea, and coast were alike veiled in grey mist and driving rain.

Nils had enough to do to steer his rather clumsy craft; but presently he caught sight of something which caused him to start to his feet, grasping the tiller with his right hand, and shading his eyes with his left, and exclaim—

‘Whose boat is that? Look, Hans, look! Why, the man will be drowned!’

Directly ahead of them, and at no great distance, a boat similar to their own in build and rig was hurling itself through the water, lying over so dangerously that it seemed as if the man whom they could make out hanging on to the weather gunwale must have resolved upon self-destruction.

‘Luff, you madman, luff!’ roared Nils in-

stinctively, yet hardly expecting that his voice would be audible through the hurly-burly.

Whether the stranger heard the warning or not, he acted in accordance with it. He brought his boat's head to the wind, and the flapping and cracking of his brown sail came like pistol-shots to the ears of those who were watching his movements. Nils reseated himself with a natural growl of indignation at having been so unnecessarily alarmed. But now, to his unutterable amazement, he saw the sail—which the occupant of the boat had made no effort to lower—fill again; the boat heeled over, and flew on her perilous course as wildly as before. In another moment the catastrophe had come. The boat was floating on her side; and the man, who had been pitched clear of her, had disappeared beneath the waves.

‘Here, Hans, catch hold of the tiller!’ cried Nils. He had got his coat and boots off, and was swimming towards the drowning man

before old Hans well knew what had happened.

Nils was a good swimmer, and was pretty well at home in the water, even with his clothes on ; but he knew that drowning men will sometimes play awkward tricks, and he was quite prepared, therefore, to salute his unknown friend with a smart blow behind the ear, should that course seem necessary for their common safety. But no such rough treatment was called for. The man was three parts drowned when Nils reached him, and would never have looked upon the light again if the stalwart Norseman had not dived, and got a good grip of his long hair. His safety was thus far insured ; but it was a less easy matter to get him into the boat. This too was, however, successfully accomplished at length, old Hans rising to the emergency, and putting forth a hauling power which, as he afterwards averred, had wrenched his old back to that extent that

he could never hope to get it straight again on this side of eternity.

And now, when the rescued man had been rubbed, and covered with Nils' dry coat, and some *aquavit* had been forced between his lips, and he had opened his eyes and murmured a few incoherent words, it seemed best to Nils to set sail at once for Bakke, and get him into a warm bed as soon as might be. But to this proposition Hans Lundgren demurred. He pointed out that there was a good boat floating on her beam ends barely a quarter of a mile to leeward—a boat which might fill at any moment, and go to the bottom, to the everlasting shame of those who had had it in their power to save her, and didn't. Having rescued the man, he urged, let it not be said that they had wantonly left the poor boat to sink miserably.

But Nils would not hear of such a thing. 'What are you thinking of, Hans?' he cried.



‘The man might die of cold while we were getting hold of the boat; and what would be thought of us then?’

‘He is no wetter than you are, and a little wind and rain will not kill anybody,’ retorted the old man sullenly.

‘But he is not like one of us,’ said Nils, who had got under way by this time, and was steering straight for home. ‘Look at his hands, how fine and white they are—and he has a gold watch-chain too. Such people are more delicate than you and I, Father Hans.’

Hans was shamed into acquiescence; but he was not pleased. He always, in relating the story afterwards, spoke with deep regret of the good boat, which, as he had too truly predicted, was never seen again; he did not believe that the man would have died from another half-hour or so of exposure: and, looking back upon the matter in the aspect imparted to it by subsequent events, Hans was inclined to think

that, even if he had died——. But that is neither here nor there.

He had quite recovered consciousness by the time that they had run the boat up upon the beach, and was able to murmur, through his chattering teeth, something to the effect that he could walk as far as the village; but when he was set upon his feet, he trembled and shivered so violently that, as he was but a little fellow, Nils took him up in his strong arms, without further ado, and strode away with him to the nearest house, which happened to be that of Claus Aandahl. Straight into the dim shop he marched, where old Lise Aandahl, in her high white cap and blue stuff gown with scarlet bodice, sat knitting among the rashers of bacon, the oil-skin coats, the boots, hats, candles, fishing-rods, and other heterogeneous articles which made up her husband's stock-in-trade; and announced briefly:—

‘ Here is one who has been nearly drowned

in the fjord. We must get him to bed, and give him something hot to drink, as quickly as we can.'

Old Lise was a practical woman. She wasted no time in inquiries or exclamations, but hurried up the creaking stair, calling 'Dorthe, Dorthe!' as she went, and made all haste to get clean warm sheets upon the bed which she destined for the use of the stranger. Her daughter came and helped her in her hospitable preparations, and it was not until she had got her charge comfortably installed beneath a mountainous down quilt, and had made him swallow a potent draught of *aquavit* and hot water, that she gave way to feminine curiosity, and began to ask a few questions. These the stranger, being now greatly comforted and restored, was ready enough to answer; but first, he said, he must thank the brave fellow who had saved his life.

Hearing this, and having observed that the

water from his dripping clothes was making a large pool upon the clean floor, Nils slipped quietly out of the room, and was down the stairs before Lise could stop him.

‘Never mind!’ said she consolingly to her guest. ‘You will be sure to see him to morrow, if you wish to thank him. But he is not one of those who hold out for being thanked, our good Nils.’

## II.

THE climate of the Hardanger district, which the most patriotic Norwegian can hardly bring himself to extol, has this set-off against its many drawbacks, that it is full of surprises of a more or less beautiful and delightful kind. The mists that gather on the snowy peaks, and eddy and trail among them like smoke wreaths; the slowly sailing clouds that fling dark shadows on the blue-green fjord; the swift drenching showers to which the meadows owe their brilliant verdure; the wind that roars in from the northward, chasing the hurrying scud before it, and unveiling the bright sun—all these come and go so suddenly, and send before them so little notice of their approach, that

each day brings with it some of the gentle excitement of uncertainty; and a man with an eye for colour readily pardons the climate which is always giving him a wet jacket in consideration of the wonderful natural displays produced by its freaks.

And as you can never count upon the weather in this region, so you need never despair of it. Nils, therefore, was in no wise surprised when he woke, on the morning after his voluntary immersion, and found the sky free from any vestige of cloud, and the sun shining down upon the glad earth with quite an Italian force. He thought, as he dressed himself, that he would just run down to the village, and ask how his unknown friend (in whom he began to feel a quasi-paternal interest, as having been the means of bringing him back to the world when he was more than half-way out of it) was progressing.

But before Nils' toilet was completed, there

came a sharp rapping at the door of the farmhouse, which was also that of the general living-room, in which Jensen *père* was just then eating his breakfast, and, without waiting for permission to enter, a small, slight young man, with long curling hair, and a handsome, eager face, peered in, asking if this were Nils Jensen's house.

'It is Christian Jensen's house, at your service,' said the sturdy individual of that name, rising slowly from his chair, and looking down upon the new-comer from the superior altitude of six-foot-three. 'I have a son by the name of Nils, who has no house, and never will have, so far as I can see. Now I think of it, you will be the young gentleman whom he fished out of the water yesterday?'

'Yes; I am he. And I have come here to offer him my poor thanks. You are a fortunate man to be the father of so brave a son.'

He spoke in accents which sounded some-

what mincing to a Norwegian ear, so that old Jensen rightly conjectured him to be a Dane.

‘Oh, as far as that goes,’ answered the farmer, ‘there is no Jensen who is a coward, nor ever was; and Nils can swim as well as any fish. Hulloo there! Come down, Nils! Here is the gentleman you were telling me about come to see you.’

Nils, descending the steep staircase in obedience to this command, was thrown into great confusion by the enthusiastic greeting which he received from the stranger, who, standing on tip-toe to reach the broad shoulders of his preserver, flung himself forward and embraced him *à tour de bras*. Nils gently disengaged himself as soon as he could, and, to give himself a countenance, began to talk.

‘Another time,’ said he, ‘if you should find yourself drowning—which God forbid!—you must remember that it is a very bad thing to throw up your arms above your head. And



there is another thing : if you sink, you should be careful to keep your mouth shut, otherwise——'

'Now that I have already found out for myself,' interrupted the stranger, with a laugh. 'Gallons of salt water I must have swallowed ! And very ill I was in the night, I can tell you !'

'But you are well again now,' said Nils, glancing at the bright eyes and healthy colour of his visitor.

'Yes, I am as well as ever I was in my life, thanks to you. Is it not an extraordinary thing that a man should risk his life to save that of one whom he never saw before ?'

'But that is done every day,' remarked Nils.

'Not quite so often as that, perhaps ; still, oftener than one would expect, I allow. But as for you, one has but to look at your face to see that you are one of those who find their happiness in doing good to their neighbours.

Whenever you see a pair of blue eyes, such as those with which you are now looking at me so solemnly, and between them a great rascal of a nose, drooping a little at the tip, and underneath that a rather wide mouth, about which there always hovers a grave smile, and whose under-lip (if you will forgive my saying so) has a slight look of indecision about it, you may know that there stands before you a man who is capable of throwing himself into the water at any moment, to save a fool, who is upon the point of being drowned, for the very good and sufficient reason that he *is* a fool. Well, I will confess that I have heard something of you from the good folks at Bakke; but I am a bit of a physiognomist besides.'

At this point, old Jensen, observing that talking was very pleasant, but that work had to be done whether a man would or whether he wouldn't, begged to be excused, and walked out of the house.

The two young men being thus left alone together, the stranger, who seemed to be rather fond of the sound of his own voice, proceeded :—

‘ Now, Nils, what I want is that we should be friends, and never lose sight of one another again. I have every reason to like you ; and as for me—well, it may sound conceited to say so—but most people like me when they know me. And first of all, I want you to wear this ring, as a little remembrance of yesterday. I bought it in Rome, and it is a real old intaglio, and I am very fond of it : that is why I give it you. Not as payment, you understand,’ he added quickly, noticing that Nils drew back a little—  
‘ no, no ! I value my life at more than the price of a ring, I can assure you, and my debt to you is one that I should never be able to pay if I wished to do so. I only offer you my ring because I should like you to have the thing I am fondest of.’

‘You are very kind,’ said Nils, ‘and I will not be so ill-mannered as to refuse your present, but I am sorry you should part with an ornament which you value so much, and what I did for you was only to get my clothes wet; I ran no risk. What you say about our being friends is a great honour for me, but—but we do not know one another yet, and——’

‘Ah, you are a true Norwegian,’ laughed the other. ‘You must know your man before you give your friendship. Well, I shall have to earn it, that is all.’

‘But your rank of life,’ began Nils.

‘My dear fellow, I am not a fine gentleman, I am the son of a peasant, like yourself; only my father was a lucky man, and left me money. But I will tell you all about that some other time. Have you also got farm-work to do, or can you come out with me for a stroll and a chat?’

Nils considered. ‘There is not much to be

done at home just now,' he said; 'but I have promised to lend a hand at one or two places in the village. If it would suit you to walk that way——'

'Any way you please,' answered the stranger; 'it is all new to me.'

And so they set out to walk down the hill towards Bakke, Nils deriving some amusement from the volubility and communicativeness of his new friend. His name, it appeared, was Gustav Richardt. He was a native of Northern Sleswig, and a Dane by birth, language, and sympathy, though a German subject pending the pleasure of a statesman who has a profound respect for the rights of nations, but who does not as yet see his way to the carrying out of Art. V. of the Treaty of Prague. By profession he was an artist, he said; and got a good price for his pictures, whereby he was enabled to visit foreign countries in search of the pictur-

esque. With this end in view he had arrived at Eide, a little higher up the fjord, a few days back ; and it was while sailing in a boat which he had hired at that place that he had been overtaken by the squall which had so nearly put an end to his career.

‘I know very little about the management of a boat,’ he acknowledged frankly ; ‘and, to tell you the truth, when the wind caught me, I lost my head completely, and thought only of reaching the land as quickly as possible, However, it has all ended well ; for I have made your acquaintance, and discovered one of the loveliest spots in the world. What a view, my good Nils ! What a range of mountains ! What a noble stretch of water ! What a foreground your village makes, with its little island in front of it to keep it quiet and snug ! I must stay here for a time, and take some sketches. Where could I get a

room? Do you think your good friends who received me last night would let me hire one of them?’

‘That I cannot say,’ answered Nils; ‘but I think they would. What they would like best would be to keep you as a guest; but when one is poor, you know, one cannot do just what one desires. I will tell them what you wish.’

‘Thank you. I would rather stay there than anywhere else. Do you know that the daughter of the house has the head of an angel?’

‘That she has, indeed,’ replied Nils, gravely. ‘But I think you said it was landscapes you painted.’

‘Oh, I do a little of everything. Old women, young women, houses, cattle—anything that is pretty or picturesque, you understand—nothing comes amiss to me. You will try and arrange about the room, then?’

‘ With great pleasure.’

Thus it came to pass that Herr Gustav Richardt, with his modest portmanteau and his paraphernalia of painting materials, which he caused to be sent to him from Eide, was installed as a temporary member of the Aandahl household, where he soon succeeded in making himself quite at home. There was some doubt, at first, in the minds of his honest entertainers as to how far a gentleman apparently so delicately nurtured would be able to put up with their frugal fare ; but he speedily reassured them upon this point, declaring that, having subsisted all his life upon fresh meat and white bread, he was utterly weary of those articles of diet, and that it was a positive luxury to be permitted to exchange them for fish, eggs, bacon, and *gröd*. He even, in his anxiety to be agreeable, went the length of expressing a special liking for *fladbrod*, the Norwegian substitute for bread ; but as *fladbrod* is a thin,



tough substance, claiming a distant cousinship to oat-cake, but composed, I believe, in a large measure of sawdust, it will be perceived that he was probably straining a point there. Be that as it may, the young Dane's adaptability was the means of procuring for him golden opinions. It was not without reason that he had boasted to Nils that most people liked him. His unaffected *bonhomie*, his geniality, and his interest—real or feigned—in the petty concerns of those about him, soon won him many friends among the villagers; and there was something about his unselfconscious communicativeness that rather took their fancy—probably by reason of the conspicuous absence of any similar trait in their own national character.

With Nils Jensen and with the Aandahl family he was pleased to place himself upon a footing of complete equality.

'You must not call me Herr Richardt,' he said; 'you must call me Gustav'—a request

which was shyly complied with, after a good deal of hesitation. He delighted the neighbours by dashing off hasty water-colour portraits of any of them who would give him a sitting. Dorthé, bending over her spinning-wheel; old Claus Aandahl and his wife in their holiday costume; Hans Lundgren, peering up distrustfully from his fishing-nets—all these, and many others, he portrayed over and over again, and goodnatureedly presented his handiwork to all who valued it. He had a quick knack of catching a likeness, and was, perhaps, more successful in his little studies of Norwegian peasant life than in the landscape painting to which he devoted his more serious attention. Hearing that a wedding was about to take place in the neighbourhood, nothing would satisfy him but that he must attend the festivity whither Nils and his fiddle were bound. Sitting in a corner, unnoticed by the revellers, he drew, with deft pencil, a hurried

outline of the scene—the dark, low-roofed room, with shafts of light from the sunset streaming through the narrow windows; the stalwart figures of the dancers; Nils' grave face looking sideways over the flying fiddle-bow; the bride in her quaint, silver-gilt crown; the bridegroom, half-sheepish, half-triumphant. This was the first sketch of the picture known as the Norwegian Farmer's Wedding, which now hangs on the wall of the Christiansborg Palace at Copenhagen, and is considered one of the happiest efforts of the versatile artist.

But all this was mere relaxation. The serious business on which Gustav Richardt was engaged was the painting of the scene which unfolded itself before the village of Bakke—the broad fjord, the pine-clothed slopes of the opposite shore, and the towering peaks and glaciers of the Folge-fond. It was a laborious task; and more than once, in the course of it, Gustav, sunny-tempered and sanguine as he

was, threw down his brushes in despair. For, as the hours and days passed on, such changes swept across the panorama; such swelling black clouds gathered over the mountain-tops, and broke with rattle of thunder and flashing zigzags of blue lightning; such rainbows hung against the hill-side; such gorgeous sunset tints glowed upon the distant snow, that paint and canvas seemed hopelessly inadequate to the service required of them. Gustav wisely decided to attempt no delineation of these bewildering atmospheric effects. His picture was to be a fair-weather picture; and whenever there was a decent spell of sunshine, he carried the implements of his craft to a meadow above the village, and there worked away till the rain came on again.

Nils and Dorthe not unfrequently accompanied the artist on these occasions, and would sit beside him, by the hour together, entranced by his descriptions of the far-away southern

lands whither his love of nature and the arts had, from time to time, led him. Nils, albeit gifted with a fine, rich imagination, which he had not left uncultivated, was fain to confess that never, in his most highly coloured fairy-tales, had he conceived of any land so lovely as that which this fortunate man had actually seen and lived in. It was of the climate and scenery of Italy—of

The land of palm and southern pine ;  
The land of palm, of orange-blossom ;  
Of olive, aloe and maize and vine,

that these two northern folks liked best to hear. They did not care so much about the ruined temples, the marble cathedrals, and the famous picture and sculpture galleries of which the artist spoke with so much enthusiasm. The notion of roses that bloomed in mid-winter, of oranges hanging from the boughs ready to be plucked, of December violets and meadows carpeted with many-tinted anemones, had a

fascination for them which never palled ; and they recurred to the theme again and again, till even the good-natured Gustav, much as he relished his own conversation, ended by becoming a little weary of it.

Nils, however, could not indulge himself by listening to these wondrous recitals every day. It was all very well for Dorthe, who could busy herself with her spindle or her needle-work as well out of doors as at home : but Nils had avocations which often led him away to a distance, and sometimes necessitated an absence of two or three days from home. For instance, when Gustav had been some three weeks at Bakke, and the picture was beginning to show dawning signs of ultimate completion, it happened that a neighbouring farmer fell into grievous trouble with his horses, several of which were attacked by influenza. The farmer, not well knowing the symptoms of the disease, and being shaken by a terrible fear of the

possibility of glanders, naturally sent post-haste for Nils Jensen, who, as naturally, started at once to place his knowledge at the service of his friend. He was some time absent ; for the farmer would not be satisfied unless the amateur doctor superintended himself the treatment which he had recommended ; but on the fourth day, things having taken a more hopeful turn, Nils effected his escape, and set his face homewards.

His way lay through the field where Gustav was accustomed to station himself for his daily labour ; and there, sure enough, Nils discovered him, and Dorthé bending over his shoulder to examine the progress of the work. Neither of them noticed his approach. The painter had laid aside his brushes, and was talking rather eagerly to his fair companion. Presently he seized her hand and pressed it to his lips. She drew it away quickly, blushing rosy red all over her face and neck, and ran down the hill ;

but she could not have been much offended ; for she laughed as she ran, and threw a glance over her shoulder before she vanished.

It was thus that Nils made his first acquaintance with the dismal passion of jealousy.



## III.

IN highly civilised communities, whose members, as a rule, aim rather at concealing their passions than at controlling them, it is probable that few lovers, having accidentally seen their sweetheart's hand kissed by a common acquaintance, would take any immediate notice of the incident. The fear of appearing ridiculous, which is one of the primary characteristics of a cultivated nature, might be relied upon to restrain them from any overt act or demonstration, however great might be their inward wrath. But Nils, who was but an unsophisticated Norwegian peasant, had no such potent curb upon the display of his emotions, and, having been greatly dis-

tressed and shocked by the little scene which he had just witnessed, strode up to the painter's side with a fine glow upon his cheeks, and a mind firmly set upon plain speaking.

'Gustav,' said he in his full deep voice, 'I did not mean to spy upon you; but I caught sight of you and Dorthe before you knew I was near, and—and I saw what you did just now.'

'What, Nils!' cried the other, wheeling round upon his camp-stool, and extending his hand without any embarrassment. 'Welcome home, again! So you saw—ha, ha, ha!—Well, I don't mind. I am not ashamed to have been seen kissing Dorthe's hand, if that is what you mean.'

Nils frowned: it struck him that this was pushing audacity to the verge of impudence. However, as he seldom gave way to anger without convincing cause, and as it seemed possible that some excuse for Gustav's beha-

viour might be found in the fact of his foreign extraction, he answered gently enough—

‘In your country, perhaps, you have different customs from ours; but with us it is not thought right to be so familiar with a young girl who is betrothed to another man.’

‘Betrothed to another man!’ cried the artist, starting to his feet. ‘What are you talking about, Nils? Betrothed to whom?’

‘Why, to me,’ replied Nils, rather surprised at his vehemence. ‘Did you not know that?’

‘Great heavens, no! Why did you not tell me this before?’

‘I thought you must have heard of it,’ answered Nils; ‘it is no secret; everybody in the village knows it. I don’t know why I did not tell you, except that there are things of which a man does not speak in ordinary talk—just as one does not laugh in church. And after all,’ he added, ‘what difference can it make to you?’

‘What difference? He asks me what difference! Why, the difference between bliss and misery!—between heaven and hell!’ cried Gustav, who was a trifle prone to hyperbole. ‘Oh, Nils, you ought to have told me of this sooner!’

Here was a revelation!

‘I could not suppose—I could not guess—’ stammered Nils. ‘And even now, I don’t quite understand You surely could never have thought of—of *marrying* Dorthe!’

‘And pray why not?’

‘We are only peasants, and you are a rich gentleman,’ answered Nils. ‘I should have thought the difference of position——’

‘Man, man!’ interrupted the other impatiently, ‘how often am I to tell you that I am a peasant’s son? I have no relations to object to my marrying whom I please; and even if I had, that would not stand in my way. And Dorthe is fit for any position.’

‘But you have only known her three weeks,’ objected Nils, unable to comprehend a passion of such quick growth.

‘Three weeks! three lifetimes! Do you think all the world is as cold-blooded as yourself? No, no, Nils, I did not mean that. Forgive me; I don’t know what I am saying. Oh, Nils, I am very, very wretched!’

The impetuous Gustav sank down upon his camp-stool, and hid his face in his hands. ‘I must go away,’ he moaned out presently; ‘I must leave this place at once.’

‘Indeed, I think it is the very best thing you can do,’ said Nils, stroking his chin ruefully. ‘I am very sorry for what has happened—especially if it has been at all my fault; but I think you had better go. The more so,’ he added naively, ‘as I myself have to go away to-morrow. My brother Frants has been up at the *sæter* on the mountains, with the cattle, for a month; and it is my turn to relieve him.

I don't see anything for it but that you should go.'

'Yes, yes,' answered Gustav, lifting up his face from his hands, 'I must go—that is clear. I owe my life to you, Nils, and I would rather die than do you an injury. But before I leave this dear place for ever, Nils, I think I will just put a few more strokes to my picture. You will not mind that. It will be an affair of three days—or four days, at the outside; and you can trust me for that time.'

'Trust you?' said Nils, holding out his hand. 'Of course I can. And I can trust Dorthe too,' he added, with a little touch of pride. 'If you like to remain here a year, it is not I who will interfere to upset your plans; but, to tell you the plain truth, I think you would be better out of the country just now; and maybe you yourself would be happier away. I don't wonder at your loving Dorthe—who could help it? But you had never seen

her a month ago, remember ; and perhaps in another month it will be with you as if you had never seen her at all.'

At this heartless suggestion Gustav groaned dismally. It was his nature to cry out when he was hurt, just as it was Nils' nature to comfort the afflicted. So that a good hour had elapsed before the two young men parted.

When this interview was at an end, Nils, in a somewhat humble and contrite mood, marched down the hill to bid good-bye to Dorthe, whom, by good luck, he found alone in the shop. To her he said nothing of what he had witnessed earlier in the afternoon, being withheld partly by delicacy and partly by pride; but in his last words he did contrive to insinuate a note of warning.

' You will not forget me when I am away?' he said.

' Forget you, Nils?—how could I do that?' asked the girl, raising her clear blue eyes to

his, and laughing at the bare idea. 'Do I ever forget you?'

'Well; but you will think of me sometimes when I am up there in the lonely mountains, and you are amusing yourself with Gustav and—and the rest?'

'I am always thinking of you, Nils,' she answered simply. 'I think of you every morning and evening when I say my prayers—yes, and a hundred times a day besides.'

'Do you?' said Nils, breaking into a happy laugh. 'Then what have I left to wish for?'

And so he went his way with his mind at rest.

Now if there was one thing more than another of which Gustav Richardt was convinced, when he awoke (after a surprisingly sound sleep) on the morning of Nils' departure, it was of his loyalty to his absent friend. It might be—so he thought, as he brooded sorrowfully over the wreck of his newly born hopes—



it might be that he had been somewhat hardly used in this matter. It might be that those who had kept him in ignorance of arrangements which ought to have been made known to him had only themselves to blame for the consequence of their negligence. It might be that Nils and Dorthé were obviously unsuited to one another, whereas no impartial mind could fail to perceive the affinity which existed between the fair peasant and himself. And it might be that a casuist would deduce from these considerations the conclusion that he was not in honour bound to carry out the hasty promise (if promise it had been) which he had made on the previous afternoon. But Gustav resolved at once that he would not allow any specious reasonings of this nature to obscure the clear light of his conscience. His duty was plain. He owed his life to Nils Jensen ; and it would be now seen that he was not ungrateful. A few more days he must spend in Bakke, in

mere justice to himself and to the future owner of his great picture ; but during these days he would be most circumspect in his conduct, and on the expiration of them he would infallibly depart. The insinuating suggestions of the tempter, which would, every now and then, make their way into his mind, he boldly faced with an *Apage retro Satanas!* and as he combed his long hair before the scrap of looking-glass with which the care of Lise Aandahl had provided him, he was conscious of a comfortable glow of self-approval, feeling that he was looking at the face of an honest man.

But now an unforeseen circumstance occurred, which, through no fault of his own, compelled Gustav to prolong his sojourn in the dangerous neighbourhood. He had disposed of his breakfast in solitude, and was preparing to set out for the scene of his daily labours, without having so much as hinted at a wish

that Dorthe should accompany him, when the rain set in with a dogged determination which seemed to shut out all hope of outdoor occupation for the remainder of that day. And, instead of clearing at sunset, it poured on all through the night, and all through the next day, and again all through the day after that; so that the village street was converted to a mere watercourse, and the hill-side into a morass. Those rainy days were trying ones to poor Gustav; for he spent them perforce in the same room as Dorthe; and he did not always find it easy to keep a bridle upon his tongue. But he behaved very well, upon the whole, talking a good deal less than usual, and busying himself over the likeness of a couple of children, whose mother had begged for this specimen of his skill. Nevertheless, before the clouds lifted, time had blunted the edge of his determination. He began to think that, after all, there was not any necessity for his leaving Bakke in such

a desperate hurry. Surely it was no great matter that he should take a few more days of comparative happiness when others had a whole lifetime of beatitude to look forward to. He was almost angry with Nils at the bare idea that so small a favour could be grudged to him. Then he remembered that Nils had said carelessly that he might stay a year if he chose, and this settled the point. 'A year I would not stay,' said Gustav to himself; 'I should not think it right. But a week is only seven days—quite a ridiculously short time if you count it by hours—and half of them one is in bed—Yes; I think I will stay just one more week.'

What gave strength to this decision was that the rain was succeeded by a spell of the loveliest weather imaginable—weather in which it would have been a sin and a shame to leave the beautiful Hardanger Fjord, which, alas! is so seldom thus favoured. Day after day the sun ran his long course across a clear blue sky,

while the snow-patches on the mountain-sides shrank under his warm rays, and tiny cloudlets formed and dispersed upon the highest summits, and a hundred rivulets, set agoing by the recent downpour, grew less and less till at last they disappeared altogether; and day after day Gustav worked on in his accustomed meadow, with Dorthe by his side. Ten days slipped away like so many minutes; and during all this time Gustav's loyalty to the absent Nils continued undiminished, save in the one particular of his prolonged presence in Norway. There was no approach to love-making in his conversations with Dorthe, and no repetition of the hand-kissing which had aroused the jealousy of her legitimate lover. They talked mostly of the old topics—Italy, the Mediterranean, the charms of foreign travel, and so forth—but, every now and then, Gustav could not refrain from a deep sigh. If Dorthe asked him whether anything were making him unhappy,

he would reply, with a most unsuccessful assumption of carelessness, 'Oh no; nothing at all!' Whereupon she would generally sigh too.

I am not going to assert that the fine weather lasted for a fortnight (which is a statement that nobody acquainted with the country would honour by a moment's credence); but it is a fact that that period of time had elapsed before the rain set in again in anything like an uncompromising spirit. When it did begin, it brought cold with it; and the general opinion was that there would be no more summer that year.

'There will be snow on the mountains this time,' remarked old Aandahl, one evening, as he was smoking a pipe with his guest over a blazing wood-fire.

To which his wife replied, 'Yes; Nils will be bringing the cattle down; we may expect him any day now.'

At this innocent observation Gustav started, and shortly afterwards rose from his chair and walked out of the room. His conscience assured him that he had done nothing wrong; but at the same time the idea of seeing Nils again made him feel excessively uncomfortable.

Dorthe was standing at the house-door, looking out at the weather. She turned round, with a smile, at the sound of Gustav's step.

'Look,' she said; 'the rain has stopped. We shall have a fine day to-morrow.'

'Will you walk with me to the end of the village?' he asked. 'I should like to look at the dear old fjord and the mountains with you this evening. Who knows whether we shall ever look at them together again! Will you come?'

'To be sure,' she answered, with a glance of surprise at his grave face. And so she wrapped a cloak about her, and followed him into the street.

The watery clouds were breaking and rising in all directions, the wind had gradually dropped from a strong breeze to almost a dead calm ; the sun had set, and the melancholy northern twilight had begun.

Gustav walked on without speaking. He had to bid his companion farewell ; and he felt that it was bitterly hard upon him that he must do so without hinting at what it cost him to breathe that sad word. But when they had left the village behind them, and were leaning upon a low wall overlooking the glassy fjord, he broke silence abruptly.

‘Dorthe,’ said he, ‘the time has come when I must leave this dear place, where I have spent so many happy days. I shall start to-morrow morning.’

He had spoken in a steady, dogged voice, keeping his eyes fixed upon the water beneath him ; but now he could not help raising them for an instant, to see the effect of his sudden



announcement. The girl seemed startled ; he fancied even that her lip quivered. She looked at him for a moment, with an odd, half-piteous gaze, and then turned her head away. Gustav's heart began to thump against his ribs.

‘ You are not angry with me, Dorthe ? ’ he said foolishly.

‘ Why should I be angry ? ’ she returned, in a rather tremulous voice. ‘ There is nothing to be angry at. I am only—only sorry. ’ And then it became evident that she was in tears.

This was more than the impulsive Gustav could bear. He forgot all about Nils, and his duty, and his good resolutions, and seized the girl's hand. ‘ Dorthe, ’ he exclaimed, ‘ you love me ! I know you love me ! ’

But she dragged her hand away, sobbing out in great distress, ‘ Oh, please don't ! Oh, please go away ! You don't know—I have never told you about—about Nils. ’

‘ What do I care for Nils ! ’ cried the young

man, excitedly. 'What is his happiness to me in comparison with yours? I know all about it; I heard it long ago; and as for myself, I was ready to give up all for his sake; but that you should be sacrificed too—that is more than he could expect. You are mine now—not his!'

'How can you talk so?' exclaimed Dorthe, indignantly. 'How can you be so wicked—you who owe your very life to him? And I too—oh, what a wretch I am! If you only knew how kind he has been to me, and how good he is! Yes; I will tell you the truth—I love you. But I will never marry you—no, I will never, never marry any one but Nils!'

Something in the tragic nature of the situation took the young man's romantic fancy, and pleased him a little in the midst of all his distress, which was genuine enough.

'You are right, Dorthe,' he said gloomily. 'The Fates are against us: we could never be

happy together, knowing that we had done our friend a grievous wrong. Let us say good-bye, now, and have done with it. For me there can be no more happiness in this world; but you will forget me when—when you are married. Yes, I will pray always that you may forget me: that is the best wish I can have for you.'

'Oh, how noble you are!' she exclaimed enthusiastically.

'No, Dorthe, I am not noble,' he answered, with some honest sense of shame; 'I have been anything but that. But now I am going to do the right thing; and to-morrow morning I shall go away, and you will never see me again. But before I bid you farewell for ever, Dorthe—my own Dorthe!—give me one kiss!' And he folded her in his arms.

But this was quite too much for the patience of old Hans Lundgren, who had been sitting under the lee of a wall, a stone's-throw off,

mending one of his eternal nets, and who had been a spectator of the whole scene, though, being somewhat hard of hearing, he had failed to catch a single word of the dialogue. He hoisted his rheumatic old body up now from the stone on which he had been seated, and tottered up to the unconscious couple, full of just indignation.

‘Come, come!’ said he, in his quavering treble; ‘your foreign ways and your mincing talk and your fine-gentleman manners I do not pretend to understand; but some things I do know; and decency, Mr. Painter—decency is much the same thing in all countries, I suppose. And a pretty sort of friend you are for a man to leave in the house with his sweetheart! Fröken Dorthe, run home as fast as you can, and get into your bed, where you ought to have been an hour ago. Ah! in my young days it is a good taste of a stout stick you would have got for your supper,’ he added, as

the girl, waiting for no second bidding, fled like an arrow from a bow.

Gustav faced the intruder, his eyes blazing with anger. 'What do you mean by sneaking round corners and spying upon me, you old fool?' he cried.

'What do you mean by calling names, you young fool? "Sneak" did you say? I will tell you who is a sneak. A sneak is a man who betrays his friend, and tries to bring honest girls to shame.'

'I swear, Hans Lundgren, that if you were a younger man, I would make you repent of having said that!'

'And I swear, Gustav Richardt, that if I were a younger man, I would catch you by the scruff of your little white neck, and drop you into the fjord. But where is the use of blustering? At my age we are good for nothing except to mend nets, and give good advice to our grandchildren. Here is a piece of good

advice for you, if you like to take it. Hire a boat the very first thing to-morrow morning, and get you gone! The snow is deep up there on the *sæters*, and Nils Jensen will be down before long. Who knows?—perhaps he has come down already. Ah, he has a strong arm, Nils, and a strong fist at the end of it! Yes, and his legs they are long and strong too; and he will have his heavy boots on that he wears in the mountains. Believe me, dear young gentleman, you had better be off.'

And without waiting for a reply the old man hobbled away, mumbling and chuckling to himself as he went.

Gustav walked slowly back to the village, greatly disturbed by this unlucky *contretemps*. After what had occurred, he felt that it would be difficult for him to carry out his intention of immediate departure, which, under the circumstances, would look unpleasantly like running away. Nor, when the morning dawned, had

he arrived at any definite decision as to his movements. The question, however, was settled without any action on his part ; for, while he was disconsolately packing his trunk upstairs, and while Dorthe was sitting alone in the kitchen, mending one of her father's shirts with trembling fingers, Nils himself walked quietly into the latter room, and stood before his betrothed.

‘ I met Hans Lundgren just now,’ he said.

His tone had no inflection of anger or excitement in it, but Dorthe perceived at once that he knew all—had perceived it, indeed, even before he spoke, when she had first caught sight of his face, which was worn and lined, as if he had suddenly aged ten years.

‘ Hans Lundgren did not understand,’ she cried anxiously. ‘ It was bad enough ; but not so bad as he thought. When he saw us, we were bidding one another good-bye for ever. I have done very wrong, Nils ; but if you will

forgive me, I will try to make amends to you. And, Nils, I have never thought of marrying any one but you.'

'That is strange,' remarked Nils, 'since you love another man.'

'But I love you too, Nils, only——'

'Only not so much as you do him.'

'Oh yes—more, I think, in some ways; but—oh, I cannot explain! You understand me, Nils; you know we have been like brother and sister all our lives; and how could I desert you for any one else in the world?'

'Yes; I suppose all the years I have loved you must count for something,' said Nils. 'And then, as you say, we are such old friends. It would never have done for you to marry a stranger, would it? You would have been miserable among foreigners, far away from your own people and old Norway, would you not?'

'Oh, I should not have minded that,' said



Dorthe, unguardedly. 'At least, I mean,' she added, not making matters much better by her explanation, 'that when one loves a man enough, it is no hardship to go anywhere, so long as he is with you.'

'And you love Gustav like that?'

'Oh, Nils,' said Dorthe, entreatingly, 'let us not speak any more of Gustav. He is going away at once, and we shall never see him again. Let it be as if he had never come here.'

'Well, well,' said Nils; 'perhaps that will be the best plan. So you are ready to give him up, then?'

'Yes, Nils—if you will forgive me.'

'If I have anything to forgive, Dorthe, I forgive you freely. I don't blame you. Gustav is a handsome, clever young fellow; and you have had a passing fancy for him, as girls will have—that is all. You will have forgotten all about him in a year's time.'

He looked keenly at her as he spoke these last words, and she dropped her eyelids without replying. Then, saying he must have a few words with Gustav, Nils left the room.

Gustav meanwhile had heard the news of Nil's return, and was standing by the door of the shop, awaiting the coming interview with some nervousness. He was not a physical coward; but his position was one which the bravest of men might have found disagreeable, and, moreover, the prospect of a sound drubbing was especially uncomfortable to a young man who dreaded humiliation more than most things.

But Nils, when he appeared, manifested no disposition towards personal violence. He came up, laid his hand gently upon Gustav's shoulder, and said, 'Gustav, will you sail over to the Sör Fjord with me to-morrow? You have never seen it, you know.'

'But Nils,' stammered the young man,

utterly taken aback, 'I—I—didn't they tell you? I am going away to-morrow.'

'You will put it off for another day,' said Nils, composedly. 'You cannot refuse me such a little favour, since we are to part so soon; and I hold particularly to showing you the Sör Fjord.'

'But, Nils,' said Gustav, in despair, 'you do not know what has happened while you have been away. It is dreadful to have to tell it; but I must, lest you should think afterwards that I had been afraid. Dorthe——'

'I beg your pardon,' interrupted Nils, 'but I know all about what you are going to say, and we need not talk of it. Will you go with me to the Sör Fjord?'

'Yes, if you wish it,' answered Gustav, wonderingly.

'That is right. And perhaps it will interest you to hear that Dorthe has promised to marry

me, and has just assured me that she never really thought of marrying any one else.'

Wherewith Nils walked away, leaving his friend a good deal mystified.

## IV.

GUSTAV was aroused early the next morning by Nils' voice at the door, calling to him to get ready. He got up, and went to the window, half hoping that the weather might afford him a pretext for declining an expedition from which he anticipated anything but enjoyment; but when he drew the curtain aside, he let in a flood of sunlight, and could see a sweep of blue sky, against which the mountains, with their dazzling mantle of fresh snow, stood out clear and sharp. So, no excuse of a meteorological kind being forthcoming, he dressed himself, and, descending the stairs with a heavy heart, joined Nils, who was waiting for him below.

The two young men walked silently down to the shore, where they found a boat, ready to be shoved off, and a tall, broad-shouldered young fellow leaning over its side.

‘My brother Frants is coming with us,’ Nils explained, ‘because I shall not be able to bring you back myself. I shall land when we reach the Sör Fjord, and make my way across the Folge-fond to Rosendal, where I have a little matter to attend to. But Frants will see you safely home.’

They were soon out of the harbour, and running rapidly across the blue water before a fresh northerly breeze. Nils was at the helm ; and Frants, seeing that his services were not at present required, stretched himself full-length in the bows, and fell asleep.

Gustav, the man of the world, was silent, awkward, and unhappy ; but Nils, the peasant, was quite at his ease, and chatted away about the mountains, the legends connected with

them, the best quarters for bear-shooting, and what not—just as if nothing had occurred to interrupt his intimacy with his companion. Gustav did not understand his manner at all, and was inclined to set him down as a little heartless. He himself could think of but one subject, and it seemed to him that Nils ought to be thinking about it too.

But when they were about midway across the fjord, Nils said abruptly, and *à propos* of nothing, ‘It is a strange thing when a girl tells a man that she will never marry any one but him, though she is in love with some one else. What does it show, do you think—that the man is a better man than most, or that the girl is a better girl?’

‘I don’t know,’ answered Gustav, uneasily, ‘perhaps both.’

‘At all events, it is a happy thing for the man to hear such words; for they do show—at least so it seems to me—that the girl he

loves best in the world has a good heart; and they show, too, that he has made her love him. Not in the way that he would wish, of course, but that, you see, would be no fault of hers.'

'No,' groaned Gustav, 'no fault of hers. Ah, Nils, what can I say to you? The fault has been mine all through. I ought to have gone away the day you went up to the *sæter*, but—but——'

'I have been thinking of that,' said Nils, gravely, 'and my belief is that, if I had been in your place, I should have done as you did. How could you help yourself, knowing that she loved you?'

It seemed so strange a reversal of their respective positions that Nils should be making excuses for him that Gustav could find no reply, and hung his head in silence.

There was a long pause. Then Nils said, 'Don't you think, Gustav, that, if you had married Dorthe, you might have regretted it some



day? A Norwegian peasant girl among your fine friends at Copenhagen—don't you think that they might have laughed at her, and that you might have ended by growing a little ashamed of her country ways? And then she would have pined for her native land—we Norwegians mostly do, I believe—and it would not have been convenient for you to be continually bringing her back here.'

'Nils,' said the young artist, assuming a more erect attitude, and speaking with greater animation than he had yet shown, 'what you say convinces me that you do not know what true love is. I doubt—forgive me for saying so, but a man cannot help his nature—I doubt whether you are capable of a great passion. As for me, I should feel it a privilege to make sacrifices for one I love—not that the trifles you mention call for any sacrifice. But it is useless to talk about these things now.' And

Gustav despondently dropped his head into his hands.

‘Ah, well,’ said Nils, quietly, ‘you will both have to bear and forbear, no doubt. But you start by loving one another, and that, after all, is the great thing. Only I hope you will not neglect to bring her back to the Hardanger and to her old parents from time to time. She is an only child, remember.’

Astonishment, hope, and doubt became at once vividly depicted upon the expressive countenance of Gustav Richardt. ‘What, what do you mean?’ he gasped.

‘Why, you foolish fellow,’ said Nils, ‘you did not really believe, did you, that I would marry a girl against her will? No, indeed! I love her too well for that. Though I dare say,’ he added, with a faint smile, ‘you will think more than ever now that I am incapable of a great passion.’

Gustav, whose emotions were always easily stirred, was overwhelmed.

He turned away to hide the tears which had risen to his eyes, and stammered out, brokenly—‘Nils, Nils, you are too good—it is not natural to be so good! When I think that you saved my life, and that this is your reward, I feel ready to kill myself! Ah, why did not you let me drown?’

‘Perhaps it might have been better for me if I had,’ answered Nils, calmly. ‘There is a superstition, you know, that if you save a man from drowning, he will serve you an ill turn, one day or another. Yet, if it had not been you, it would have been some one else, most likely. You cannot command love. She would have loved me if it had been in her power. Well, we can’t all get what we want. A few weeks ago I was the happiest man in all Norway. I declare to you, Gustav, I had not a trouble in the world—not one! And now—

but I will not weary you with lamentations. Here we are at the entrance of the Sör Fjord ; and presently you will allow that I have brought you here to show you something worth seeing.'

They had left the broad fjord now, and the boat was gliding before a light wind into a dark and narrow channel, hemmed in on either side by black precipices wet with the overflow from the melting snow-fields above. Snow lay in patches down to the water's edge. Here and there a silvery thread hung from the cornice of the cliff where a stream escaped from the glacier, but these waterfalls were too distant to produce any audible sound. A profound stillness brooded over this lonely region ; not a sign of human life or habitation was visible ; and a thin veil of mist, which had drifted up from the seaward, obscured the sun, and added to the melancholy grandeur of the scene. Gustav, as in duty bound, uttered

some commonplace expressions of admiration, but the truth was that he was hardly in a fit mood for the appreciation of scenery, and found it difficult to imitate his friend's outward composure. The uppermost feeling in his mind was by no means one of triumph, but rather of shame and self-reproach. His desires were, it seemed, to be realised; but surely no man ever yet won his bride more unworthily. He could not feel comfortable in the society of his magnanimous rival, and was heartily glad when they sighted a cluster of small wooden houses, where Nils announced that they were to land.

They ran the boat up upon the shore, and presently a thin, miserably clad woman came out from one of the hovels and greeted them. She led them into her wretched habitation—being, like every one else in the surrounding district, acquainted with Nils—and set before them such scanty provisions as her larder con-

tained—some fish and *fladbrod*, and a bottle of Norwegian beer.

‘They are very poor, the people about here,’ whispered Nils hurriedly to his friend, ‘and when one is poor one is apt to fall into slovenly ways ; but you will hurt her feelings if you do not eat something.’

So Gustav, though he had no appetite, and was somewhat sickened by the squalor of the ill-ventilated room which they had entered, made some show of eating, and contrived to swallow a fair portion of *fladbrod*. Nils ate well, having a long day’s tramp before him ; and when he had sufficiently fortified himself, he thanked his hostess, bade farewell to his brother, and held out his hand to Gustav.

‘Good-bye, Gustav,’ said he. ‘Don’t look so sad ; and don’t trouble yourself about me. When I return from Rosendal, I shall have made some plan to go away for a longer time.

It will make you all more comfortable to have got rid of me for a little.'

And so he turned, and took his way up the barren mountain-side.

'Is it not rather dangerous to cross the glacier quite alone?' asked Gustav of Frants, when they had regained their boat, and were once more under way.

'Not for our Nils,' answered Frants. 'He knows the mountains as well as I know the fjord—ay, and better. He will come to no harm—never fear!'

A fitful moaning wind had arisen, and was sweeping down in gusts from the cliffs, driving the grey mist before it. Gustav sank into silence and reflection, which was not all of a joyful kind. But when they had run out some distance from the land, and could see more clearly the glaciers and snow-fields of the Folge-fond, he was aroused by an exclamation from Frants.

‘There is Nils!’ he cried. And from a mighty pair of lungs he sent up a shout that awoke a hundred echoes.

A faint responsive cry came from the distant heights, where Gustav could distinguish a black figure showing clearly against the snow, which was lit up, just there, by a gleam of sunlight. Then the fog closed over it, and they saw it no more.

Gustav will remember that glimpse of the solitary figure, with the sunlight upon it and the mist-wreaths above and below, to the end of his life; for it was the last he, or any one, ever saw of Nils Jensen.

When the days of wind and storm that followed had passed away, and it was known that Nils had not arrived at Rosendal, many of his friends, though knowing that his fate could not be doubtful, searched the glacier far and wide, hoping that at least they might be able to find his body, and give it decent burial.

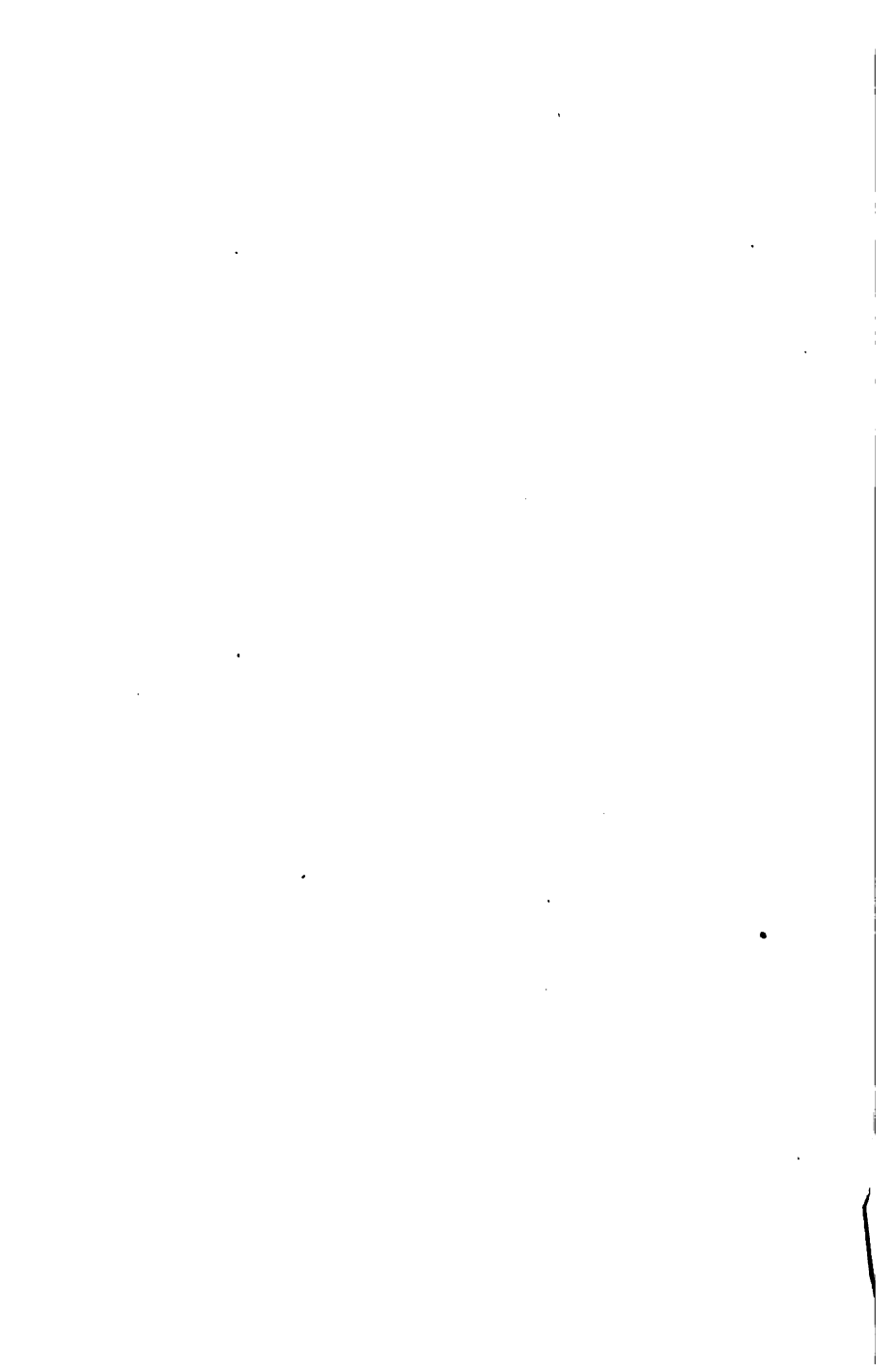


But the search proved unsuccessful, as, indeed, it was almost certain to do ; for the mountains were deep in fresh-fallen snow.

Some there are who say that Nils was weary of his life, and never intended to come down from those frozen and wind-swept solitudes ; but this view is usually expressed in a low voice, and in very select company ; for it would not be likely to be a popular one in Bakke, and might expose those who held it to some risk of rough usage.

As for the children, they have established a legend upon the subject of their good Nils, in which they firmly believe. They say that the spirits of the mountains, finding Nils ready to their hands, and perceiving that, by reason of his open-handedness, he would never be able to lay by money for his old age, took him away before his time to the ice-palace of which he used to speak, where he will never know toil or sorrow more ; and more than one village

matron, struggling with her refractory offspring, has been heard to reduce them to submission by the threat—‘ You wicked children! If you do not mend your ways, Nils will have nothing to say to you when you die.’



THE PRINCESS PAOLINI



## *THE PRINCESS PAOLINI*

### I.

ONE fine January night, some years ago, the Princess Paolini held a great reception. It was the first entertainment of any kind that had taken place beneath her roof since the death of the old Prince, her husband, and all Rome flocked to attend it. Cardinals and ambassadors, monsignori and generals, Roman duchesses and English tourists, grey-jacketed Papal Zouaves fresh from the field of Mentana, artists and sculptors, statesmen and antiquaries, they streamed up the broad marble staircase in an unending tide; for everybody was anxious to get a sight of the beautiful young Princess, and on an occasion like this invitations were not

hard to come by. Outside, the grey, time-worn façade of the old palace was lighted up by a row of flaming torches ; the piazza, of which it occupies one entire side, was thronged with carriages, and, from a stage erected near the portico, a brass band brayed forth operatic selections with more or less of cheerfulness and accuracy.

Everybody who knows Rome knows the Palazzo Paolini, and everybody who has any acquaintance with Roman society is aware that its late owner was no lineal descendant of the famous old family whose name he bore, but a partner in the well-known Florentine banking-house of Flocchi and Company. It was upon his marriage with the orphan daughter of poor old ruined Filippo Paolini that he was permitted to assume the title and arms upon which his subsequent career reflected so much credit ; and, though I believe that he was somewhat coldly received by the Roman nobility upon his first

advent among them, his generosity, his artistic tastes, his fine manners, and, above all, his great wealth soon sufficed to triumph over the prejudices of the most exclusive, and placed him, ere long, upon as high a social pinnacle as any dweller in the Eternal City who was neither a priest nor a politician could aspire to occupy. He bought back the palace and the lands, which had gradually slipped away from the possession of his wife's ancestors; he even, at infinite pains and expense, recovered many of their lost art treasures; he set the old family upon its legs again, and received such members of it as presented themselves to him with open arms and an open purse.

Of these there was no lack. From many a dilapidated farm in the Umbrian marshes, and many a crumbling, moribund city, they flocked to the capital, those handsome, impoverished Paolinis—priests, some of them, and some soldiers, but most without occupation—and for



them all the new Prince willingly expended his money and the influence which money carries with it. He revived the glories of an ancient house, in short, and, in so doing, deserved well of his country. Such, at least, was the expressed opinion of his Holiness Pope Gregory XVI. and others, though some people, remembering the past history of the Paolini family, may have thought that the world would have suffered no great loss by the extinction of that race of plotters, poisoners, and spendthrifts.

And so, for a matter of thirty years, Gieuseppe Flocchi, Prince Paolini, reigned in Rome as a leader of society and a liberal patron of the arts, and was beloved by all classes alike, the only drop of bitter in his cup being the want of any child to succeed him in his honours. But when, in the fulness of time, the Princess Paolini died, the widower thought fit to take a step which—at least among the ranks of his relatives—proved immediately fatal to

his popularity. If, as the proverb says, no man should be accounted happy, neither perhaps ought he to be deemed wise, until he is dead. At the age of seventy or thereabouts, the sage and experienced Prince Paolini, who had undertaken a journey to London with the pardonable object of diverting his thoughts from the loss which he had sustained, reappeared in Rome, bringing with him, as his second consort, a beautiful English girl fresh from the schoolroom ; and his cousin the Cardinal, throwing up his hands and his eyes, cried aloud, in the bitterness of his heart, that there was no fool like an old fool.

The Prince's second experience of married life proved a brief one. He was found dead in his bed one morning very shortly after his return home ; and the newspapers, which united in lauding the many good deeds of his long life, differed a little as to the cause of its termination, some speaking of apoplexy, and others of

heart disease. Rumour, ever prone to be ill-natured, filled the air, at the time, with whisperings which I should be the last man in the world to think of repeating, especially as they are scarcely relevant to the present narrative ; but certain it is that the sad event, which caused many tears to flow from the eyes of those who had been recipients of the dead man's bounty, left his relations wonderfully calm. However, they gave him a magnificent funeral ; and I well remember seeing the procession pass slowly and solemnly down the Corso, a troop of monks leading the way, bearing huge lighted candles and chanting a melancholy dirge, some ghastly masked figures, members of the Confraternity of the Misericordia, striding on either side of the bier, and a long train of mourners and coaches and carriages following. The Paolinis were all there—a goodly clan of them. They reverently deposited the remains of their departed chief in the church of Sta. Maria del

Popolo ; and then I dare say they drove back as quickly as they could and heard the will read.

I don't know whether it was then or upon some subsequent occasion that the contents of that document were communicated to the relatives of the deceased ; but, whenever it was, I should have much enjoyed being present and watching their faces while it was announced that, barring a few unimportant legacies, the misguided man had bequeathed the whole of his vast property, real and personal, to his widow. The lady was not even hampered with any of the ordinary provisos which common prudence dictates, with regard to remarriage, or the like. Her husband's wealth was hers, and hers absolutely. The family felt this to be very grievous, and could perhaps hardly be blamed for so feeling, though, no doubt, young Carlo Paolini, of the Guardia Nobile, went a little too far when he declared publicly that, in his opinion, it would be a righteous act to dig the

old idiot up out of his grave and fling his body into the Tiber. His uncle, the Cardinal, very properly rebuked him for such a display of temper and bad taste, and suggested the more practical course of disputing the will. Some such attempt was, indeed, subsequently made; but it proved abortive; and then the Paolinis, with that common sense which has never yet deserted them where their own interests have been at stake, recognised the fact that by far the best thing they could do would be to keep on good terms with the fortunate foreigner to whom their ancient palace and broad lands now belonged.

Of course, certain people declared that they tried to poison her; but what will not certain people declare? There was nothing in the rather abrupt departure of the young Princess for her native land to excite so shocking a suspicion in any but evil-thinking minds; nor could anything be more natural

than that a girl married and widowed at the tender age of eighteen should fly for comfort and consolation to the arms of a fond mother. At all events, Rome saw her again at the end of a couple of years. She took up her abode in the luxurious apartments of the Palazzo Paolini, which had been prepared to receive her as a bride; she showed herself upon the Pincian in an English-built victoria drawn by a pair of high-stepping bays, and presently—by way, as it was thought, of manifesting in a public manner that she understood the duties and importance of her position—she issued invitations for the great reception of which mention has already been made.

Those who were privileged to attend this gathering were forced to admit that the demeanour of their hostess afforded little room for adverse criticism, and that, Englishwoman as she was, she bore herself in all respects as became a Roman princess. She was very tall,

very beautiful, and very magnificently dressed. With her dark hair and eyes and her clear pale complexion, she might have been an Italian born. She was a little proud and cold perhaps; but that was a fault upon the right side. Standing at the head of her staircase, with Cardinal Paolini at her elbow and a little court of her relations and other great people grouped behind her, she received her guests like any empress. She made no mistakes. Possibly she had gone through a private rehearsal with the Cardinal, or it may have been that she had taken some pains to learn her part; at any rate she was polite to everybody, and more than polite to a favoured few. She had a well-chosen word or two for each of the great ladies whose friendship was worth securing; she advanced a few steps and shook hands with the minister of a country understood to be friendly to the Papal Government, while the representative of another power, with whose

actions his Holiness had recently had reason to be displeased, was dismissed with a grave, distant bow.

The latter form of recognition was, indeed, the only one vouchsafed to the majority of the Princess's guests, as they defiled before her, and passed on to the picture-gallery and the great ball-room, where a string band was playing for their benefit; but when my own turn came to pay my respects to the lady of the house, I was honoured by a much warmer reception. The fact is that I had entered the Palazzo Paolini uninvited. I had only just arrived in Rome, and, having heard of the proposed festivity, I thought I would walk round after dinner and see how my old friend and playmate, Sybil Ferrars (with whom I had been intimately acquainted since the day when I had the honour to attend her christening), would acquit herself in her new and trying situation. I flattered myself, too, that the



sight of a familiar face among all those strange ones would not be unwelcome to her ; and so I was not at all astonished when the Princess, on recognising me, forgot all her stateliness and dignity for a moment, and held out both her hands with a little glad cry of surprise.

‘ You here ! ’ she exclaimed. ‘ How delightful ! When did you arrive ? and how long will you remain ? Oh, I hope you are going to stay the whole winter ! Where have you been all these long, weary years ? ’ (It was only two years since I had seen her last ; but at her time of life two years is a much longer period than it is at mine.) ‘ Will you come and see me to-morrow morning about twelve o’clock ? Then we can have a good long talk all by ourselves.’

Cardinal Paolini fixed his deep-set black eyes upon my humble person, and looked me through and through. He is a handsome, commanding-looking man, as all the Paolinis

are, and he has a way of confronting inferior mortals with a cold, penetrating gaze which is supposed to strike terror into their mean souls. Of course, I had no chance against him. With his tall, spare figure draped in scarlet robes and old lace, he looked the very picture of a proud prince of the Church, and seemed born to exact obedience, if not respect; whereas I, I am sorry to say, am a rather fat old man, and though I may have had my share of good looks once upon a time, I have never heard that my appearance was of an awe-inspiring kind. However, I am not afraid of Cardinal Paolini, nor, for that matter, of the whole Sacred College put together; so I favoured him with a Briton's stony, stolid stare, before which he presently dropped his eyelids, while the faintest possible smile flickered for an instant about his thin lips.

I suppose the Princess must have noticed the rigidity which had suddenly overspread my

speaking countenance, and have guessed at its cause ; for she glanced over her shoulder at the Cardinal, and remarked, in a very clear and distinct voice, and in the Italian tongue (which I observed she had learnt to speak with remarkable purity), ‘ Your Eminence need feel no alarm. Mr. Clifford was at school with my father, and, what is better still, he is married already.’

At this speech there was a general smile, and I saw several of the bystanders nudge their neighbours ; for of course everybody knew that the Paolinis were not going to let their fair relative take a second husband if they could help it, and the Cardinal’s distrust of Englishmen was, as I afterwards learnt, a matter of notoriety.

I passed on into the picture-gallery, feeling rather sorry that the Princess should have thought it worth while to make something like a scene out of so small a matter. It was suf-

ficiently obvious that the Cardinal must wish and intend to get her under his thumb; and I have always observed that, when a clever and strong-willed man has such designs with regard to a woman, the only safe opposition she can bring to bear against him is that of a wall of passive resistance. He has already taken a long step towards victory when she tries to sting him with sharp speeches.

I never have any lack of acquaintances in Rome, where I am in the habit of spending two or three months out of every year, and I soon found myself surrounded by a knot of old friends in whose society an hour slipped away pleasantly enough. I was just thinking that it was about time for me to be going back to my hotel to bed when I ran up against young Dick Seaton, the sculptor, who grasped my hand with more than his usual cordiality.

‘My dear Mr. Clifford,’ he cried, ‘you are the very man of all others whom I wanted to

see! You knew the Princess Paolini before she was married, didn't you? Who was she? What made her marry that drivelling old man? Tell me about her.'

'Why all this eagerness?' I inquired. 'What are Princesses and Paolinis to you, my poor Dick? Have you fallen in love with her, you foolish boy? And do you suppose she is ever likely so much as to notice your existence? Oh, vanity of youth!'

Dick burst out laughing. 'Fallen in love with that beautiful statue?—not exactly!' he answered. 'I could as easily fall in love with the Capitoline Venus. Besides, I hope I know my place, and have a proper reverence for my betters. Moreover, I can tell you, if you don't know it already, that the Princess Paolini will never marry again. His Eminence yonder would have a hundred suitors poisoned sooner than let it come to that.'

'Well, well!' I said. 'I dare say she will

be none the less happy if she does have to remain single. What do people want to get married for? Is matrimonial bliss so common a thing that all you young folks should be in such a hurry to surrender your freedom?’

Dick laughed again, and asked whether Mrs. Clifford was with me. Dick is sometimes inclined to be a little bit impertinent.

‘You know very well that the climate of Rome does not suit my wife,’ I answered. ‘She is in England, paying a round of visits. So you want to hear all about the beautiful Princess, do you? Well; walk home with me, and I will tell you what I know.’

We made our way through the crowded rooms, down the broad staircase, and so out on to the piazza, where we lighted our cigars, and strolled away in the moonlight.

‘The Princess Paolini,’ said I, as we turned into the Corso, ‘is one of that old cat Lady Augusta Ferrars’s daughters. You don’t know

Lady Augusta, because you live abroad three parts of the year, and when you do go to London you roam about the streets in a velveteen coat and a pot hat, so that even your relations have to look in at a shop window when you pass ; but everybody else knows her, and I believe most people rather like her. A select few, of whom I have the honour to be one, hate her like poison. I don't know whether her daughters feel grateful to her, but I suppose they ought, for she has done the best she possibly could for them, according to her ideas. The eldest will be a duchess one of these days, when her husband succeeds to the title ; the second is married to old Kreutzerpfenning, the German banker, and will be one of the richest women in Europe when he dies, as he is bound to do before long ; the third is the famous Lady Highcliffe, of whom you must have heard. They tell me she leads one of the most exclusive sets in London ; but I don't know much

about her myself; she has soared to a social height which I can never hope to reach. Lady Augusta arranged all these matches, and carried them through, unaided and alone, in the face of considerable difficulties. It was she who took poor Sybil almost out of the nursery, made her change her religion, and handed her over to old Prince Paolini, who might have been her grandfather. I believe the poor child made some objection; but children never know what is good for them; and, after all, now that the man is dead——'

Here Seaton spat upon the ground in an offensive, noisy manner, of which I strongly disapprove.

'Don't do that, Dick,' said I: 'it is unnecessary and ungentlemanly. Live in Bohemia, if you will, but for Heaven's sake keep clear of its low habits.'

'I will back the habits of Bohemia against the habits of Belgravia, any day,' he returned,



‘In Bohemia a woman has at least some natural love for her offspring.’

‘So she has in Belgravia, only it takes a different form.’

‘Faugh! don’t tell me. Made her change her religion, did they? I am a Catholic myself, as you know, but then I was born one: hang forcible conversions! And you talk of it all as if it wasn’t enough to make a man sick!’ And here I am sorry to say that, in spite of my remonstrance, Dick repeated his objectionable act. ‘But I dare say she was a willing victim,’ he resumed, after a pause. ‘No doubt she is as worldly and selfish and mean as the rest of them, and Heaven only gave her those great melancholy brown eyes by some mistake.’

‘She is nothing of the kind,’ I answered—  
‘at least she used not to be.’

‘Then why did she marry that old dotard?’

‘My good Dick,’ I said, ‘you don’t know the stupendous power of a nagging woman. I

sincerely trust you never may. Lady Augusta's daughters were all high-spirited girls, but they had to give in to her in the long-run; and, for my part, I don't wonder at it.'

'H'm! Well, I don't think I shall execute the order, all the same,' remarked Dick, musingly.

'What order?' I asked.

'Oh, the Princess Paolini honoured my studio by a visit the other day, and, after criticising my poor productions with a good deal of complimentary condescension, was pleased to say that she was anxious to sit to me for her bust. I told her that I didn't much care about that kind of work as a general thing, but that, as her face interested me, I would see whether I could not make an exception in her case.'

'That was rather impertinent of you.'

'Yes; but her manner had been rather impertinent to me. Besides, I only spoke the

truth. Her face interested me. All things considered, I don't think it interests me any more; and when she comes to my studio to-morrow, as she has appointed to do, I shall tell her I can't find time for her.'

'You young goose!' I said, 'what have you to do with the private life of your sitters? Do you institute inquiries into the antecedents of all your models, pray? The Princess Paolini, who is no worse than her neighbours, you may be sure, will pay you well for your work, and bring you into notice if you are civil to her. Don't quarrel with your bread and butter.'

'I shall do very well without the Princess's patronage,' answered Dick, with his nose in the air; 'and I am not going to degrade my art into a mere means of grubbing up money. Here is your hotel. Good-night.'

And so my young friend marched away in the moonlight, ascended the broad flight of

steps that leads from the Piazza di Spagna to the church of the Trinità de' Monti, and was soon out of sight. Dick Seaton's father, as I happened to know, made him, at that time, an allowance of 300*l.* a year, upon the strength of which I suspect that the young sculptor muddled away more than double that amount annually. I was rather pleased with him for respecting his art, and despising money: I like to see youth generous and careless and free-handed; and as I knocked up the porter at the Hôtel de l'Europe, and stumbled in through the half-open door, I said to myself that Dick was a fine young fellow, though of course an ass. I dare say, though, that if he had been my son, I should have considered the latter part of the phrase more descriptive of him than the former.

## II.

PUNCTUALLY at twelve o'clock on the following morning I presented myself at the Palazzo Paolini, and, after a short delay, was ushered into the presence of its mistress. She received me in what would, I suppose, have been called her boudoir, had not such a name seemed so absurdly inappropriate as applied to one of the vast lofty chambers of the grim old palace. It was too large a room to be altogether comfortable, and of course its windows fitted badly and let in currents of air, as all Roman windows do; but it had a southern aspect, it was luxuriously furnished in the modern Parisian style, and a mass of flowers and a great cage full of twittering birds gave it

a certain cheery, home-like appearance. A wood-fire was burning brightly on the hearth, on one side of which the Princess reclined in a low easy-chair, while facing her sat a straight-backed, sandy-haired, middle-aged person, whom I at once perceived to be her lady companion.

A sense of humour, we are often told, is nothing more nor less than a quick perception of the incongruous; but to my own mind I must confess that there is no spectacle at once so ludicrous, so delightful, and so rare, as that of absolute fitness. Every condition in life has its ideal type, yet how seldom is that ideal realised! Portly bishops, weasel-faced attorneys, admirals who talk in a sustained bellow and interlard their conversation with oaths—how few and far between are they, and with what immense satisfaction does one greet a man whose appearance accords in all respects with his calling! Companions should, of

course, be tall, angular, and of uncompromising aspect; they should wear mittens, be perpetually knitting grey woollen stockings, and should never speak unless addressed. Everybody has met the ideal companion scores of times in novels and plays; but how many people have come across her in real life? The Princess Paolini's companion fulfilled all the above-enumerated conditions; and when I was introduced to her, and heard that her name was Miss O'Grady, the perfection of the specimen struck me with such force, and tickled me to that extent, that I had much ado to keep myself from bursting into an unseemly guffaw.

Miss O'Grady so completely satisfied my soul that, for the first few minutes, I really could not take my eyes off her, and was only able to lend a half-attentive ear to the conversation of the Princess, who was chatting away about old times in a manner far more

characteristic of the Sybil of former years than of the *grande dame* whom I had seen patronising ambassadors on the previous evening. It was the sound of Seaton's name that roused me from my state of contented contemplation.

'I suppose Mr. Seaton is an old friend of yours,' the Princess was saying. 'I saw you go away together arm-in-arm last night. Do you know, I have taken rather a fancy to that young man. He was so very rude to me the other day.'

'And do you like people who are rude to you?'

'Sometimes. It makes a change, you know. Nowadays I find that nearly everybody crouches down at my feet; and I think those who hate me most are the most polite to me.'

'I can't believe that any one can hate you,' said I.

She shrugged her shoulders, but made no reply; and Miss O'Grady, without lifting her



eyes from her knitting, delivered herself of a short sharp 'Hem!' which I took to mean, 'Well, you *are* an old fool!'

'Would you believe,' the Princess resumed, 'that Mr. Seaton makes difficulties about producing a bust of me? As if the greatest sculptor in Rome would not be only too glad to have such an order! I don't in the least want a bust of myself, and certainly, in the first instance, had not the slightest anxiety to sit to your friend; but when he seemed inclined to refuse my offer, I determined at once that he should accept it, whether he pleased or not; and, in fact, I am going to give him my first sitting this morning. Will you come with me, and relieve Miss O'Grady? You don't care to come, do you?' she added, turning to her companion; and that lady, looking up for a moment, answered in a deep solemn voice, 'I'd be glad to be excused.'

Mindful of the foolish determination which Dick had announced to me, I thought I might

manage to do the young fellow a good turn, in spite of himself, if I acceded to the Princess's request, so I said I should like very much to accompany her, and shortly afterwards found myself comfortably settled on the soft cushions of the victoria of which mention has already been made, and progressing at a round pace up the steep streets which lead to the Via di San Nicolo da Tolentino, where Dick's studio was situated.

As we pulled up before the door with a jerk, a little incident occurred which half amused and half distressed me. An elderly man, dressed in a suit of threadbare black, who had been sauntering along the pavement on the opposite side of the way smoking a cigarette, halted as the clattering equipage dashed past him, and, with pardonable curiosity, stood still for a moment to scrutinise the beautiful lady enveloped in furs who was preparing to descend from it. The Princess caught sight of him

while her foot was on the step, and, turning instantly to the footman who was holding out his arm to assist her to alight, she said, in her quick imperious way, 'Tell that man to come here.'

In a moment the stranger, hat in hand, was standing before her and bowing obsequiously, polite interrogation expressed in all his features.

'Cardinal Paolini sent you to watch for me,' said the Princess, looking over the man's head as she spoke. 'You can tell him that you saw me enter Signor Seaton's studio, and that I shall probably remain there an hour or more. You may add that I had no one with me except an English gentleman.' And with that she swept into the house.

The stranger opened enormous eyes of astonishment, dropped his head beneath his shoulders, exhibited the palms of a dingy pair of hands, and volubly assured me that the lady had made some mistake. He had never seen her before in his life, and had not so much as

heard the name of Cardinal Paolini. But I was too much ashamed and annoyed to answer him, and hurried into the studio without daring to glance at either of the servants.

I followed the Princess into the bare, scantily furnished ante-room in which Dick was accustomed to keep his visitors waiting for him, and then, using the privilege of an old friend, I ventured upon a mild expostulation. 'After all,' I concluded, 'the man was very likely not put on to watch you.'

She had turned her back to me in order to examine some bas-reliefs which hung against the wall, and had not, I am afraid, paid much attention to my harangue.

'Oh yes, he was,' she said quietly. 'I know his face perfectly well; and he knows that I know him.'

'But why speak to him before your servants? Surely it would be more dignified——'

‘That is of no importance whatever,’ she interrupted. ‘It is an open secret that the Cardinal surrounds me with spies, and, for anything I know, those very servants may be in his pay. Of course I might disregard his emissaries as beneath notice, if I chose ; but it makes him angry to know that he is detected and laughed at ; and so, from time to time, I send him a message which I am sure will be delivered, because all his creatures hate him so. Ah, here is Mr. Seaton.’

Mr. Seaton now made his appearance. He was clad in a complete suit of brown velveteen, with knickerbockers ; his fair hair, which in moments of excitement was apt to stand on end, was parted in the middle and carefully brushed ; his beard had evidently been trimmed that morning, and a faint odour of eau de Cologne entered the room with him. In short, I perceived at once that the young jackanapes had come in prepared to ride the high horse, and

his first words convinced me of the correctness of my judgment.

After bowing low to the Princess—I only got a nod—he expressed his regret that she should have been put to the trouble of revisiting his studio. He had given the subject full consideration, he said, and he had arrived at the conclusion that he must decline the honour of executing her bust. In point of fact, he did not go in for that kind of work. Of course a beautiful face was always worth studying ; and that (if he might be permitted to say so) was the reason why he had hesitated a little in the present instance ; but, after thinking it over, he had decided that it would be wiser for him not to depart from his general rule. He must therefore beg to be excused.

The Princess was sitting with her back towards me, so that I could not see how this announcement affected her. She did not, however, appear to be offended.

‘Of course, if you won’t do it, you won’t, and there is no more to be said,’ she answered; ‘but I confess I am disappointed. I want to have a good bust of myself, and I fancied, somehow or other, that you would succeed better with me than one of the others, to whom I shall now have to apply. I don’t know what your reasons may be; but if it were only loss of time that you dreaded——’

‘You would pay me at a rate that would overrule that objection. I don’t doubt it; and I am infinitely obliged. But—forgive me, Princess—there are some few things in the world that money will not buy. My productions, which are very far from being first-rate, are worth a certain price; and that price I expect, and receive, for them. I don’t want more, and would not take more.’

At this juncture I could not refrain from calling out, ‘That’s bosh, you know;’ but I

doubt whether either of the young people heard the interruption.

‘I beg your pardon,’ said the Princess, quite meekly; ‘I ought not to have tried to bribe you; and, indeed, I did not exactly mean to do that; but I thought perhaps your time might be valuable, and—and—but it does not signify. You don’t pursue art as a profession, then?’ she resumed, after a momentary pause.

‘Oh yes, I do,’ answered Dick, laughing, and showing a fine double row of white teeth; ‘and very glad I am to get an order too. But I love my art for its own sake, not for what it may bring me, and I would not undertake any work that went against the grain with me, if I were offered five thousand pounds for it.’

Here again I felt constrained to exclaim, ‘Dick, Dick, don’t be such a prig!’ And I am bound to say that my second observation met with as little recognition as my first.



‘What do you mean?’ she asked, turning her great serious eyes full upon me.

And then I remembered that she was a princess and that Dick was only a struggling sculptor, and I had not the courage to caution her against flirting with one so far beneath her in rank.

After this the Princess’s visits to Dick’s studio became matters of daily occurrence. Miss O’Grady went with her as representative of the *convenances*, and took her knitting. I did not offer to replace that lady a second time, having a dislike to hard wooden chairs, but I often dropped in, in the course of the morning, and found the trio always in the same postures—the Princess mounted upon her daïs, Dick working away at his clay, and the grim-visaged companion nodding a little over her interminable stocking. Entering, one day, without knocking, as my habit was, I was arrested upon the threshold by a warning ‘Hush!’ and

presently became aware of Miss O'Grady slumbering peacefully upon her high chair, her head thrown back, and her lower jaw dropped, while Dick was hastily drawing a caricature of this sleeping beauty, and the Princess, peeping over his shoulder, was stuffing her pocket-handkerchief into her mouth to control her laughter. When I saw Dick's sketch, which I must say was not devoid of humour, I exploded, and awoke the unconscious sitter, who glanced suspiciously first at us, then at her knitting, and finally remarked, gravely, 'I believe I've dropped a stitch.'

At this there was a general outburst of merriment; for indeed the poor lady had solemnly drawn out her knitting-needles, one by one, in the course of her nap, and her long grey stocking lay, a hopeless ruin, on her knees.

I was not sorry to see that poor Sybil had still so strong a leaven of childishness left in

her nature. No one who had encountered her, night after night, as I had lately done, in the salons of the Roman aristocracy, would have supposed that the pale, stately Princess was capable of giggling over a caricature like any schoolgirl; and, in truth, if rumour were correct, her life among her relations was not of a kind to encourage mirth.

‘ Will you drive with us to the Doria-Pamfili gardens this afternoon ? ’ she asked, as she put on her hat and gloves. ‘ We are going there to gather flowers, Miss O’Grady and I ; and perhaps Mr. Seaton may be able to meet us.’

It was a delicious warm day in the early spring ; I had no special engagement for that afternoon ; so I said I would go ; and we went. We left the carriage at the Villa, and wandered among those shady glades, which are now almost as well known to Englishmen as Richmond Park ; and there, sure enough, we found

Mr. Dick waiting for us. Then we all went down upon all fours, and gathered the many-tinted anemones with which the park was carpeted, till two of us were reminded by the aching of our backs that we were no longer so young as we had once been, and, assuming a more convenient attitude, left the self-imposed task to those whose limbs were still lithe and whose bones were unracked by rheumatism. Out came Miss O'Grady's grey stocking; I obtained permission to light a cigarette; and as we sat on the dry grass, exchanging a word every now and then, but making no effort at sustained conversation, the laughter of the young folks rose from the dell whither they had wandered, and gladdened the soft, warm air.

Human nature is human nature all the world over. Throw an obscure but appreciative youth constantly into the society of a lovely empress; leave them alone together;

let them grow intimate, and—audacious, senseless, discreditable as it may be—it is as likely as not that that youth will become enamoured of that empress. So much I readily admit. I have indeed repeatedly done so in the course of conversation with Mrs. Clifford, who is pleased to blame me because Dick Seaton chose to fall over head and ears in love with the Princess Paolini, and who, with that terse vigour which characterises all her utterances, has more than once observed that nothing but senile imbecility or pure wickedness can explain my conduct in not ‘nipping the thing in the bud.’ But although, from considerations which it is needless here to particularise, I have for many years made it a rule never to contradict Mrs. Clifford, I must still take leave to doubt whether, even if I had been possessed of the blighting influence attributed to me by my wife, I should have done wisely or well to exercise it. For whose sake, pray, was I to interfere? For

Sybil's? Was I to deprive her of the honest devotion of an honest heart, and of a few brief hours of enjoyment and oblivion out of a life predestined to chill splendour? For Dick's, then? Why, what better thing can happen to a young man than that he should fall in love? What is more certain to bring out the good side of his nature, to subdue the earthly, to lead him to do the very best that he can to achieve name and fame? I am fat, but I am romantic. I have my own reminiscences, and have had my own experiences; and it is my deliberate opinion that no mortal has ever been otherwise than benefited by having truly loved another. I watched, then, the progress of Dick's attachment, with the serene conviction that no harm could come of it. If there had been a question of ultimate marriage, I grant you—but I was perfectly aware of the utter impossibility of any such issue.

After that visit to the Pamfili gardens we

four commonly spent our afternoons together. We explored the Palace of the Cæsars, we roamed over the Coliseum, we wandered among the ruins of Caracalla's baths. One pair of us developed an immense interest in ancient architecture—an interest only to be satiated by clamberings over giddy heights of masonry, where apparently no two people could safely post themselves, except hand in hand. The remaining couple, being of riper years, were content to pitch their camp-stools upon the green sward below, where the violets grew, and to gaze up at the figures of their adventurous friends standing out sharp and black overhead against a deep-blue sky.

Dick was crazily in love, and showed the state of his feelings so openly, that the most indifferent of lookers-on could scarcely ignore it. Even Miss O'Grady, a singularly cautious and reticent person, honoured me with an occasional meaning smile, when the young man

made himself more than usually ridiculous, though she never alluded to the subject in words. As for the Princess, I was a little puzzled to arrive at a comprehension of her sentiments with regard to her adorer. She was wayward and capricious with him, treating him sometimes kindly, sometimes coldly, and occasionally favouring him with a very direct and unequivocal snub. She seemed to be really fond of the lad, and yet anxious to keep him at a certain distance. I often wondered whether she sought his company for his own sake, or merely with the amiable object of annoying her relative, the Cardinal.

I happened to meet that distinguished prelate, one morning, on the staircase of the Palazzo Paolini, whither I had betaken myself upon I forget what errand. Dick had trumped up some frivolous excuse to accompany me. The Cardinal came stepping down the marble stairs, an erect, stately, scarlet figure, with his



two footmen in their queer, old-world liveries behind him, and I stood aside to let him pass, taking off my hat, as in duty bound. Dick, on the other hand, never so much as lifted a finger to his wideawake, and frowned aggressively.

‘What do you bow to that fellow for?’ he asked, rather before his Eminence was out of hearing distance.

‘Honour to whom honour is due,’ I answered.

‘Hang it all! you’re a heretic; and you oughtn’t to think any honour is due to the Scarlet Woman, as you call the Holy Church.’

‘I took off my hat to the scarlet man,’ says I. ‘I have nothing to do with his religious opinions; I simply acknowledge his social position.’

‘Social position!’ echoed Dick, with tremendous scorn. ‘Yes, that is all you fellows who pride yourselves upon being “men of the world” think of. You don’t care two straws

whether a man be honest or not ; but if he can write " Duke," or " Cardinal," before his name, off go your hats instinctively. What a set of poor toadies you all are ! I, who am only a poor, unfashionable sculptor, don't choose to abase myself before an infamous scoundrel, such as your friend there, whatever his name may be. However, I confess that I hate Cardinal Paolini personally—and he hates me.'

'You conceited young donkey !' I returned—for I must say I didn't like being called a toady—'pigmies may hate giants ; but giants don't trouble themselves much about pigmies. I have a very strong suspicion that Cardinal Paolini has not yet realised the circumstance of your existence.'

'Very well,' said Dick, composedly ; 'have it your own way ; I don't want to dispute your theories. As a matter of fact, however, the Cardinal is not only aware of my existence, but has had a good try to put an end to it. I was

within an ace of being stabbed on my own staircase the night before last.'

'By the Cardinal?'

'No; but by a fellow whom he had put on to do it. I was groping my way up the stairs when it occurred to me, I really don't know why, that I might as well strike a light. I did so, and immediately found myself almost touching a ruffian with a naked dagger, whom I clutched, and who promptly made a bolt for it, leaving a piece of his coat-collar in my hand. I let him go; it wouldn't have been any use to me to capture him; but I recognised him at once as one of the spies whose business it is to watch us.'

'What spies? And whom do you mean by "us?"' I inquired, rather startled.

'Why, the Princess, you know, and—and myself,' replied Dick, looking extremely self-conscious.

The worst of it was that it was true. Half

an hour later, the Princess made some pretext to lead me away into the picture-gallery, and there poured into my ears an indignant complaint of the insolence, the wickedness, the cruelty of her cousin, the Cardinal. Her interview with him that morning had been, it appeared, of a somewhat stormy nature. In the double character of senior member of the family and spiritual adviser of his young kinswoman, he had taken upon himself to denounce certain features of her conduct in no measured terms. He had admonished, he had scolded, he had threatened. Last of all, he had actually pushed audacity to the point of accusing the Princess of unbecoming familiarity with—whom did I suppose?—with Mr. Seaton.

Monstrous charge! I expressed myself at once astonished and shocked.

‘I told him that he would never have dared to insult me so, if he had not been a priest, and I alone and defenceless,’ continued

the poor Princess, with tears in her eyes ; ‘but the truth is that he is so blinded by his terror of my marrying again, and taking the Paolini estates out of the family, that he will not believe that I can have any pride or self-respect of my own. I shall never marry again, as it happens ; but if I did, I am hardly the person to make a *mésalliance*.’

‘Certainly not,’ I acquiesced ; ‘and anything so preposterous as a marriage with Dick Seaton——’

‘Preposterous is hardly the word,’ interrupted the Princess, rather inconsistently. ‘Mr. Seaton’s family is quite as old as our own, I believe, for that matter ; but of course I understand the duties of my position ; and I need hardly tell you that I have never thought of Mr. Seaton except as of a friend. I have so few friends,’ she added, with a sigh ; ‘indeed I have none except you, and my good faithful O’Grady, and Mr. Seaton. I don’t choose

•

to give any of you up at the Cardinal's bidding.'

'Quite so; but don't you think it might be prudent——'

'To drop Mr. Seaton? I dare say it might; but, fortunately or unfortunately, neither he nor I happen to be cowards. Do you know that he was very nearly murdered a night or two ago?'

'Well, I did hear something of the kind. But who told you?'

'Mr. Seaton himself,' she answered, looking me calmly and a little defiantly in the face. 'Why should he not? I spoke to the Cardinal about it this morning, and told him I knew of his unsuccessful attempt.'

'And what did he say to that?'

'Oh, he only laughed, and assured me that if he wanted to get rid of anybody he should use some less clumsy means to effect his purpose. And then he said that Rome was

full of robbers, and that my friend ought to keep a lamp on his staircase. After which he declared that he forgave me my suspicions, and went smiling away. It is not always easy to make him angry. There is a cool determination about him that frightens me. Sometimes I think I will give up all my money to these Paolinis, as they tried to make me do when I first got it; but then I don't like the idea of being beaten by the Cardinal; and besides,' she added, with a sigh, 'you know what sort of a welcome I should meet with at home if I returned to my mother penniless.'

Indeed I did. With Lady Augusta on one side and Cardinal Paolini on the other, I could foresee little but troublous times for my poor Princess.

Presently she rose from the low tapestried chair upon which she had been seated, and shook her lovely shoulders, as if to free them from some physical load. 'Come,' she said, 'let

us forget our troubles for a day or two at least. Have you ever seen my villa at Frascati? Miss O'Grady and I are going out there for a little change: will you join us? I have asked Mr. Seaton to give himself a holiday too, and come and examine my frescoes, which he says he is very anxious to see.'

I accepted willingly enough, but I confess that I should have been just as well pleased if Dick had been left out of the party. I was beginning to feel really uncomfortable when I thought of that unscrupulous old Cardinal. There was a mediævalism about his course of procedure which I did not like. Romance is all very well, but it is hard that one should have to submit to the dull monotony of the nineteenth century and incur the perils of the sixteenth at the same time; and I reflected, with a shudder, that our enemy was quite capable of undermining the Frascati villa, and blowing us all up, à la Darnley.



However, my soul soon ceased to be disquieted within me. When I was sitting, after my dinner, in the great cool dining-room of the Villa Paolini, sipping my Montefiascone, I was able to take a calmer and more philosophical view of the situation. The Princess had at that time a *chef*, in whose praise I cannot speak too warmly; the Montefiascone was excellent; the view which I indolently contemplated through the open windows left nothing to be desired. Beyond the gardens of the villa—the marble terraces, the statues, the fountains, and the dark cypress and ilex groves—stretched the billowy Campagna, spanned by ruined aqueducts which lessened into the distance; far away against the horizon rose the dome of St. Peter's, a shadowy blue cupola, and the snows of the remote Soracte were flushed with the afterglow of sunset.

‘One can but die once,’ thinks I, being perhaps a trifle pot-valiant; ‘and if anybody

wants to assassinate me, now is his time. We are all of us tolerably contented and happy at the present moment, and how do we know what bad times the future may have in store for us?' I added aloud, 'This is better than Rome.'

'Is it not?' cried the Princess, who was in high spirits. 'Heaven be praised! we have put twelve good miles between ourselves and the Cardinal.'

And Miss O'Grady, looking down at her plate, muttered *sotto voce*, 'Bad luck to um!'

As for Dick, he said nothing; but I dare say that, like the parrot, he thought the more.

Ah, well, we had a very pleasant and happy week, we four, at the Villa Paolini. The young people had the best of the fun, no doubt; but that was only right and proper. After a certain age one ceases to expect any special happiness on one's own score; but if a man be only sentimental enough, his grey

hairs need not debar him from enjoying a good deal of vicarious bliss. We galloped over the brown, windy Campagna (Miss O'Grady, in a short grey habit and a voluminous blue gauze veil, was indeed a joy for ever); we drove to Albano and Rocca di Papa; we climbed Monte Cavo, and picnicked among the ruins of ancient Tusculum; and at night, when the sun had set, and the heavy southern dew had fallen, we wandered among the terraces and avenues of the Paolini gardens, or sat in arm-chairs on the verandah, and watched the stars. That is to say, that two of the party wandered, while the other two sat still. I had, and have, a great respect for Miss O'Grady; but I like to remain quiescent for a time after dinner, and my intercourse with her was not of that kind which demands solitude and picturesque accessories. Yes; it was a quiet, happy time; and like all times, happy and otherwise, it came to an end. I well remember our last evening.

The stars were glittering in a cloudless sky, the air was as soft and warm as on a June night in England, and all the good folks of Frascati had gone to bed to save their candles. There was profound silence in the garden, whither, as usual, we had betaken ourselves after dinner. I was peacefully puffing at my nocturnal cigar; Miss O'Grady, who was unable to knit in the dark, was sitting in a low chair a few paces from my own, her head supported by her long, lean hand; and Dick and the Princess had strolled away together, as they pretty generally did at that hour. From time to time we caught glimpses of their dark figures flitting from shadow to light and from light to shadow among the scented orange-trees and the myrtles and tamarisks, and every now and then the sound of their voices was borne to us and died away again as the fitful night breeze rose and fell. Once they paused by a marble balustrade some fifty yards away from us, and I

could see that that rascal Dick was gazing with all his might and main into the great brown eyes of his beautiful companion.

O zarte Sehnsucht, süßes Hoffen !  
Der ersten Liebe goldne Zeit !

As I have, I think, said before, I am old, but I am romantic ; and while my eyes were resting upon the Princess and the sculptor, my mind had skipped nimbly back to the year 1830, and to the days when I too lingered out of doors in the falling dews and forgot this weary world and all its dull necessities in looking into just such another pair of brown orbs. I do not speak of Mrs. Clifford's eyes, which, indeed, are not of that colour, but of a bluish-green or greenish-blue, I think. I have not the advantage of her presence beside me as I write, and can't be positive as to a shade or so. Poor homely O'Grady, too, must have had some recollections of happy bygone days, I fancy ; for she moved uneasily in her chair,

and heaved a prodigious sigh from time to time, and the bones of the formidable stays in which she was encased creaked as if in sympathy.

We all re-entered the house together at length ; and upon the hall-table we found a little pile of letters which some officious person had forwarded to us from Rome.

Five minutes afterwards two, at least, of our number had stepped back with dismal haste from the domain of romance to that of reality.

## III.

ONE of my letters was from Mrs. Clifford, and contained the rather startling intelligence that she proposed to join me very shortly. The east winds, she wrote, had been most piercing of late; she felt that she required a change; and, in short, she had been persuaded to try the effect of a journey to Rome by dear Lady Augusta Ferrars, who was just about to start for that city on a visit to her daughter, the Princess Paolini. Would I see about rooms at the Hôtel de l'Europe, and secure tickets for the Easter ceremonies at once? In a postscript I was asked whether I had happened to meet young Lord Chelsfield yet. Because Mrs. Clifford rather imagined that Lady Augusta expected to find him at Rome.

I took in the situation at a glance. 'Dear Lady Augusta' intended to marry her daughter to Lord Chelsfield. The match would be a good one; and, moreover, it would save the Paolini wealth from ever reverting to the family of the late Prince. Indeed, realising, as I then did for the first time, how important it was, from Lady Augusta's point of view, that the Princess should make a second marriage, I was at a loss to comprehend why that devoted mother had ever allowed her dear child to return to Italy. But when I remembered the antagonistic designs of Lady Augusta and the Cardinal; when I recollected that these two determined persons would shortly be brought face to face; and when I further reflected upon the complications which might arise out of Dick's intimacy with the Princess, and upon the measure of condemnation which was only too likely to fall upon my own head on account thereof, I could contain



myself no longer, and exclaimed involuntarily, 'Here's a row!'

The Princess looked up, with a rather pale and weary face, from the perusal of her own correspondence, and said, 'I beg your pardon?' But I did not repeat my vulgar ejaculation.

'I must return to Rome,' she continued, in a tone of some depression. 'Mamma is coming to see me.'

'So must I,' I remarked, not less dolorously. 'Mrs. Clifford is coming to see me.'

At which we had a brief, dreary laugh.

And so next day we all jogged back along the Via Appia to face our troubles, and left Frascati and its foolish fancies behind us.

Upon the events of the few following weeks I prefer not to dwell. I am unable to look back upon the time with any sort of gratification or comfort. Everything turned out exactly as I had anticipated. Lord Chelsfield—a feeble, dissipated youth, with a head

like a kite—made his appearance simultaneously with Lady Augusta, and I was given to understand by my wife that he was destined to become the husband of my beautiful Princess. I observed carelessly that the lady would probably have something to say to that arrangement, and received a somewhat acrimonious reply to the effect that she had already signified her disapproval of it pretty plainly.

‘She refused him last summer,’ Mrs. Clifford said. ‘In fact, I believe that she left her mother in that abrupt way and returned to Rome simply in order to get away from him. She is obstinate and headstrong, like all her father’s people; but dear Lady Augusta has always been able to manage her girls so wonderfully that I have no doubt she will succeed in the present case. I am sure I hope she will; for really poor Sybil would be so very much happier as the wife of an English nobleman than she can be among these horrid, garlic-

eating Italians! And then of course there is the money to be thought of.'

'Just so,' I replied. 'I dare say Lady Augusta will carry her point: I know she has a convincing way with her.'

Of the tremendous power possessed by that ugly, fat, commonplace-looking woman I had good reason to be aware; for poor Ferrars was one of my oldest friends, and I had seen him literally worried into the grave by her. As a tiny fly can goad a creature thousands of times its size to the verge of madness, so Lady Augusta, whom I cannot but regard as equivalent to a whole swarm of flies, would tease and torment and sting any person who happened to oppose her wishes till the wretched victim was fain to shriek for mercy. I never knew her fail to get her own way. She was utterly pitiless; she had a moral hide thicker than the material one of any hippopotamus, and she was thoroughly proof against discouragement and

fatigue. Her management of her children—not, as a general rule, easy people to drive—was, as my wife truly said, wonderful. They resisted her, it is true, but she always conquered them in the end, and never forgot to make them smart for their mutiny into the bargain.

I went, as in duty bound, to pay my respects to this amiable creature shortly after her arrival, but she received me so rudely, and said such unpleasant things about certain private affairs of my own with which I had never had any reason to suppose her acquainted, that I picked up my hat, after five minutes of her company, and fled.

As ill-luck would have it, at the door of the hotel I met Mrs. Clifford just starting for her afternoon drive, and was immediately ordered to accompany her. Then I soon learnt the cause of my rough reception by Lady Augusta. It was I, it appeared, who had introduced my low friends into the Princess Paolini's house,

and had filled her head with the most shocking and revolutionary notions. It was I who had striven to make mischief between mother and daughter. It was I who had encouraged a monstrous flirtation between Sybil and some vulgar, designing artist, and had made her the laughing-stock—positively the laughing-stock!—of all Rome. Dear, dear! what an afternoon I did have of it! Round and round that weary Pnciani—which I declare is not much larger than an ordinary soup-plate—round and round, with the record of my delinquencies, past and present, dinned into my ears in a steady, ceaseless monotone—round and round at a slow jog-trot, till my head grew confused, and my ears began to sing.

‘I can’t stand this any longer!’ I gasped at length. ‘Let me go; I am getting giddy.’

‘Nonsense!’ returned Mrs. Clifford; ‘what can there be to make you giddy?’

‘I tell you I *am*,’ I reiterated, outraged

Nature asserting herself ; ‘ and what’s more, if you don’t let me out of this carriage at once, I believe I shall be sick ! ’

Then I was allowed to go.

After that I thought I might as well keep away from the Palazzo Paolini. My going there would have done nobody any good ; and, if you will have the whole truth, I suppose I was a little afraid of that dreadful old Lady Augusta, as well as of some one else nearer home. I declare, upon my honour and conscience, that I would have braved any number of old women, if, by so doing, I could have rescued my poor Princess from the destiny which I saw looming before her ; but Sybil, when I met her in public, avoided me in a rather marked manner, and indeed it was not easy to see in what way my visits could be of service to her, whereas they would assuredly have the effect of exasperating her dear mother.

Nor did I, at this time, see much of Dick Seaton. Several times, when I went to his studio, I found the outer door locked, and upon one occasion, when I did happen to catch him in the act of entering, he behaved in so unreasonable a manner that I very nearly lost my temper with him. I must say I was sorry for the poor lad when I saw his pale face, the dark circles under his eyes, and his dishevelled hair; nor did my pity suffer any diminution after he had taken me into the studio, and had begun prancing about the room, beating his breast, striking his forehead, and cursing the day of his birth, after the time-honoured fashion of disappointed lovers. But that he should proceed to abuse me, as the chief cause of all his woe, was really rather more than I could patiently submit to.

‘Upon my word, Dick,’ I exclaimed, ‘this is a great deal too bad! I make every allowance for your abnormal state of mind, but,

when all is said and done, you are a man—and from a man one does expect some rough kind of justice. If you had been an old woman, you know, one would of course have had to bear your absurd accusations in silence. Now do please try to recall the true facts. Did I ever lead you to suppose that you could marry the Princess Paolini? Didn't I, on the contrary, strive, on every possible occasion, to convince you that such an alliance was, and always must be, entirely out of the question? Didn't I warn you, the very first night I was in Rome, against falling in love with her? And didn't you reply that there was no danger of such a catastrophe—or words to that effect?'

'I don't remember anything of the kind,' answered that shameless young man. 'I know you might have saved me a great deal of wretchedness, if you had chosen to speak a little more plainly when you saw how things were going. Why couldn't you have told me



that it was arranged that she should marry that rascal Chelsfield? I suppose you must have known it. As for differences of rank, and that kind of thing, I did not think so much of that as you do: I haven't your immense reverence for a title, you know'—this was meant to be very cutting—'and I confess I have sometimes thought that, one day, when I had made a name for myself—however, that does not signify now. She won't see me; and the hall-porter at the Palazzo, whom I bribed with a couple of scudi, told me that Lady Augusta had given orders that I was never to be admitted. I think I will go and drown myself in the Tiber.'

'I wouldn't do that,' said I. 'I know you won't believe me, but it is nevertheless true, that you will get over this sooner than you think.'

'Get over it!' shouts Dick, beginning to rampage about the room again. 'My good sir,

you don't know what you are talking about. Because you have "got over" half a dozen flirtations, you imagine that love is nothing but a passing fancy, which resolves itself very soon into a rather pleasant memory. Well, you are wrong. I believe that love, when it has once existed between two people whose tastes and habits and ideas are the same, is eternal.' He added, in a lachrymose tone, which would have been pathetic if it had not been a trifle ludicrous, 'She and I thought alike upon all subjects.'

I stuck my hands in my pockets, stared up at the ceiling, and murmured :—

Oh, how hard it is to find  
The one just suited to our mind !  
And if that one should be  
False, unkind, or found too late,  
What can we do but sigh at Fate,  
And sing, ' Woe's me, woe's me ! '

I trotted out this quotation from the lumber-room of my memory, where I keep

many such odds and ends, intending it as an expression of sympathy; but I think it was lost upon Dick, who only seemed to have caught one word of it.

‘She is *not* false!’ he cried.

‘Did I say she was? To whom should she be false? Hardly to you, I imagine; for I happen to have heard from her own lips that she never harboured any such absurd notion as that of becoming your wife.’

Well, I meant it for the best. What kindness would there have been in encouraging the poor fellow to foster illusions? But no sooner had I made the above veracious statement than Dick turned upon me with the utmost fury and rudeness, and requested me to take myself off.

‘Confound you!’ he bawled, stamping his foot, ‘why do you sit grinning there, and driving me mad? I wish you would get out, and leave me alone with my misery!’

Now, as I said before, I can make every allowance for the mentally afflicted, but I do think that some amount of respect is due to grey hairs. I resolved, therefore, as I made my way down the Via di San Nicolo da Tolentino, that I would leave my young friend to himself until such time as he should have recovered his senses. So for the next fortnight or so I mooned about Rome alone, seldom seeing either Dick or the Princess, and, to tell the truth, feeling very dull and lonely without them.

Now it came to pass that, as I was sitting in a sequestered avenue of the French Academy gardens one morning, lost in melancholy meditation, I was roused by a smart tap on the shoulder, which almost made me jump out of my skin. Wheeling round, with a wrathful ejaculation—for I hate to be startled—what should I see before me but the long, lank

figure of Miss O'Grady, who saluted me with a short stern nod.

'I saw you come in here,' said she, in her deep voice, 'and I followed you.'

'My dear Miss O'Grady,' I cried, making room for her on the stone bench beside me, 'I am delighted to see you! How is the Princess?'

'It's much you care how she is!' retorted Miss O'Grady, with a toss of her head and a snort.

It was really astonishing how, at this time, everybody turned against me, who, as all readers of this narrative must admit, had given no cause for such animosity. I shrugged my shoulders in meek silence.

'Do you know,' resumed Miss O'Grady indignantly, 'that they are going to marry her to this half-witted English lord?'

I took off my hat, and scratched my head

irritably. 'My dear madam,' I answered, 'really I can't help it.'

Miss O'Grady positively snapped her finger and thumb within an inch of my nose. 'Poh!' she exclaimed, with a suddenness which made me start back to my corner of the bench. 'And you call yourself a man! If I was a man I'd let 'em see!'

'Well, my dear Miss O'Grady,' said I, 'and suppose you were a man, what would you do?'

'Sure I'd stand by me friends,' cried the intrepid lady, her brogue developing in equal measure with her excitement. 'I'd not see a poor child hunted and driven into consenting to marry a man who's not fit to black her shoes!'

'Oh, she *has* consented then? I think you forget that the Princess is a free agent, and no one can force her to marry against her will. How do I know that she may not like Lord Chelsfield well enough?'

This was rather disingenuous of me, I admit; but Miss O'Grady's violence had so taken me by surprise that I wanted time to collect my thoughts.

'Indade and indade there's nothing of the kind,' she returned, with much warmth, 'and it's you that should be ashamed to say so. See now,' she continued, lowering her voice to a whisper; 'you can save her yet, if you'll do what I tell you. Her mother's gone to Naples for three days. Now here's what you have to do. Be off to England, the first thing in the morning, and take the poor child with you. She's half dazed with fright and distress, and she'll go with you if you tell her she must. And there's one we know of who won't be long in following. If you make the most of your time, I wouldn't say but you might get her safely married before ever my Lady Augusta caught you up.'

'Gracious Heavens!' I exclaimed, aghast,

‘you cannot have realised the meaning of what you propose. I kidnap the Princess Paolini! Why, my dear lady, if there was no other objection to the plan, you must see that, old as I am, it would be in the highest degree scandalous and improper——’

‘Sure, haven’t you got your wife with you?’ broke in Miss O’Grady, composedly.

‘My wife! And you really imagine that my wife would join in such an adventure? No, no, Miss O’Grady; I am very, very sorry for poor Sybil, and goodness knows I would help her if I could; but your plan is hopelessly impracticable—it is indeed. The fact is that Mrs. Clifford’s views with regard to this question are by no means identical with my own, and—and in short, I could not even think of making such a suggestion to her as you speak of.’

‘So you’re afraid of your wife!’ sneered Miss O’Grady, rising, and shaking out her grey



skirts with a gesture of infinite scorn. 'Very well. But remember now, whatever comes of this, it will be your fault. Good morning to you.'

And with that she strode majestically away, and left me. I felt a little ashamed of myself, though I did not see then, and don't see now, how I could have answered Miss O'Grady differently, nor in what way I could have impeded a marriage to which the Princess had herself consented.

Later in the day I came across Dick in the Piazza di Spagna, and, thinking it as well that he should know the worst, I caught him by the arm, and briefly informed him that the Princess was engaged to marry Lord Chelsfield.

'I am perfectly well aware of the fact,' he answered coldly, and turned on his heel.

So that was all the thanks I got for voluntarily undertaking a disagreeable task. Truly it is an ungrateful world.

## IV.

THAT same evening I was taken by Mrs. Clifford, rather against my will, to a great ball given by the French ambassador. It was a very grand affair; there was a larger display of uniforms than usual; the stairs were lined by servants in gala liveries, and the Roman princesses had got their famous diamonds out from the bank for the occasion, and were all ablaze with them. Rather to my surprise, the first person whom I met, on entering, was Dick Seaton, who did not seem particularly pleased to see me. He was standing close to the door, and I rather gathered from his attitude and expectant look that he was waiting for Somebody. My suspicions were confirmed when I

returned, in the course of half an hour or so, after having made the complete circuit of the rooms, and found him in the precise spot where I had left him. I had some doubts as to the probability of Somebody's arrival, and I had none whatever as to the inexpediency of a meeting between her and Dick, so I ventured, at length, to approach the latter, and to remonstrate with him upon the folly of stationing himself at the elbow of a powdered footman, who might sneeze at any moment, and cover him with flour from head to foot; but he shook me off impatiently, alleging, with obvious absurdity, that he was standing near the doorway for the sake of fresh air.

I sauntered away again, thinking to myself that, at that advanced hour, my young friend was not likely to receive any reward for his long vigil, and that, after his conduct to me, he deserved to meet with disappointment; but just as the clock was striking half-past twelve my

ear caught the sound of a distant flunkey's voice bawling out, 'La Principessa Paolini,' and presently in sailed Sybil, magnificent in sapphires and diamonds, and shook hands with the ambassadress. Dick followed in her wake. I never saw the beautiful Princess looking so well. Her usually pale cheeks had a faint pink flush; her eyes were sparkling; she conversed, in a far more animated manner than was habitual with her, with the circle of admirers by whom she was immediately surrounded. She was evidently excited; and, strange as it appeared to me, I could not help thinking that she was happy.

What did it all mean? I was completely puzzled, and my wonderment was increased when I saw the Princess take Dick's arm and move away towards the ball-room, whither I followed the pair in time to see them join in the waltz which was just then being played. Now I knew that the Princess had never

honoured Dick in this way before, and I knew, too, that of late she had not even spoken to him in public: therefore I was more perplexed than ever. One of the French attachés offered me an explanation of the phenomenon.

‘*La belle princesse s’amuse,*’ said he. ‘They are going to make her marry the milor, but they tell me she has sworn to lead him a stormy life. That will be more easy for her, as I believe he is the incarnation of jealousy.’

Following the direction of my informant’s glance, I caught sight of Lord Chelsfield, whose goggle eyes were fixed upon his betrothed, while he struggled to screw up an intractable set of features into the semblance of a scowl.

‘Oh, that’s it, is it?’ said I. And then, having seen enough, I went home to bed.

I was a little disappointed, I confess. In my young days, people who were crossed in love, or forced to marry against their wishes,

took their affliction in a different, and I venture to think a more healthy, spirit, from that which obtains in modern society; and I must say that I would rather have seen Sybil pale and despairing than reckless. ‘*Autres temps, autres mœurs,*’ thought I to myself, as I blew out my candle. ‘Perhaps, after all, it comes to much the same thing in the long-run.’

Mrs. Clifford has long held a theory, built upon I know not what foundation, that it is good for her health to breakfast in her own room. I myself, when I am abroad, adopt the foreign hours, and take a solitary *déjeuner à la fourchette* at midday, or thereabouts. I had just made an end of this repast, on the morning after the ball at the French Embassy, when a huge square envelope was brought to me, which I found to inclose a politely worded request from Cardinal Paolini that I would do him the great favour to call upon him at his residence in the course of the day. He would

be ready to receive me, he said, at any hour that might suit me.

My acquaintance with the Cardinal being of the most formal character, I felt some curiosity as to his motive for desiring an interview with me, though it was easy to divine that it must have some connection with the Princess and her affairs. That her intended alliance with the English lord must have thrown the good man into a state of furious indignation I well knew ; and it occurred to me that he might possibly have formed some scheme for using me as a means of persuading or intimidating her into renouncing the project. I was resolved that, should this surmise prove well founded, I would show a bold front to the enemy. I dare say it was a consciousness of having been conspicuously worsted in several recent encounters with members of the opposite sex that made me say to myself with so much determination, as I prepared to obey the Cardinal's summons,

that I would stand no bullying from him or any other living man. I marched down the shady side of the Via Condotti, and so, across the Corso, to the Cardinal's residence in the Via della Scrofa, and rang his door-bell as bold as a lion.

I was at once shown into a small, rather scantily furnished study, where I found the great man in conference with his secretary. He dismissed that functionary as I made my entrance, and rose to receive me, looking dignified and handsome, as he always did, and far more amiable than usual. He took my hand in his well-shaped white fingers, on one of which sparkled a huge archiepiscopal ring, and favoured me with that gentle pressure which is the Italian equivalent for a hand-shake, and which somehow is always rather disagreeable to me.

'I thank you infinitely, sir,' he said, in his own language, 'for your kindness in granting



me an interview. I should not have ventured to put you to so much trouble had I not known how sincere an interest you take in all that concerns my cousin, the Princess Paolini.'

I grunted, not choosing to make civil speeches till I should have heard what was wanted of me; and the Cardinal, begging me to take a chair, resumed his own seat, and continued:—

'I have a piece of intelligence to communicate to you, with which you will, I think, be surprised, and I hope pleased. You can hardly have failed to notice that your friend Signor Seaton (a most agreeable and talented young man, with whom I regret that I am but slightly acquainted) has for some time past been attached—very deeply attached—to my cousin.'

I smiled, and shrugged my shoulders. It might be so, I said, or it might not. Who could answer for the foolish notions that will

get into young men's heads? For you see I was not going to commit myself.

The Cardinal leant back in his chair, rested his elbows on the arms, and, folding his hands, peered at me over them with a sidelong, benevolent gaze. 'It has been so,' he said; 'and I may add that the attachment has been mutual.'

He paused again; but I was getting bewildered, and judged it best to hold my peace.

'Yes,' he repeated, 'the attachment has been mutual; and I am happy to announce to you that Signor Seaton and the Princess were married at eight o'clock this morning.'

I started to my feet with a cry of amazement, called forth not more by the news itself than by the fact that Cardinal Paolini should be the person to communicate it to me. For a moment I really thought that this grave ecclesiastic was making me the subject of a hoax.

‘Surely you cannot mean—’ I stammered.  
‘Is it possible that this can be *true*?’

‘I have the best reason for knowing it to be so,’ replied the Cardinal smiling, ‘since I had myself the honour of performing the ceremony.’

After that I felt that nothing could ever astonish me again. I was quite prepared now to hear that Lady Augusta had been present at the wedding, and that Lord Chelsfield had given away the bride. I suppose I must have involuntarily uttered the name of that ill-used nobleman; for the Cardinal remarked drily, as if in answer to some observation from me:—

‘Ah, Lord Chelsfield—I fear this will be a disappointment to him, and also to Lady Augusta Ferrars. In truth, one of my reasons for seeking an interview with you, sir, was to request you to kindly convey the news to that lady—she having thought fit to use expressions to me, shortly after her arrival in Rome, which

have rendered all further intercourse between us impossible. The young couple left by train this morning, and, for reasons the force of which you will easily appreciate, desire their destination to remain a secret for the present.'

'But you yourself, *Eminenza*,' I could not help saying, 'surely this marriage cannot be agreeable to you. I should have thought that the loss of the Paolini estates——'

'It certainly would not have been agreeable to me that the Paolini estates should pass out of the family,' he replied calmly. 'Happily no such misfortune has occurred. The Princess has made a formal and legal transfer of all the landed property and a large portion of the personal estate of her late husband to her cousin, the present Prince. I pressed upon her the propriety of some such course in the early days of her widowhood, but she did not at that time see fit to listen to my counsels. The

present transfer was made at her own instance, and is therefore the more creditable to her.'

I saw it all now. The priest had outwitted the lady after all. The Church was triumphant, and Lady Augusta was nowhere. I picked up my hat and umbrella, and prepared to depart.

'I congratulate your Eminence,' I said, 'upon the excellent bargain that you have made. I regret that I am unable to carry the good news to Lady Augusta Ferrars, as you so obligingly desire me to do; but circumstances compel me to quit Rome immediately. I have the honour to wish you a very good morning.'

I hurried back to the hotel, packed up my clothes, left a note for Mrs. Clifford, drove to the station, and never paused again till I was safely on the other side of the Alps. There I ensconced myself in an hotel at Geneva, drew a long breath, and awaited events.

Denunciations of an epistolary kind I did receive in due course; but at these I could

afford to smile. The London season was drawing to a close before I again joined Mrs. Clifford; and by that time the Paolini-Seaton scandal was already an old story.

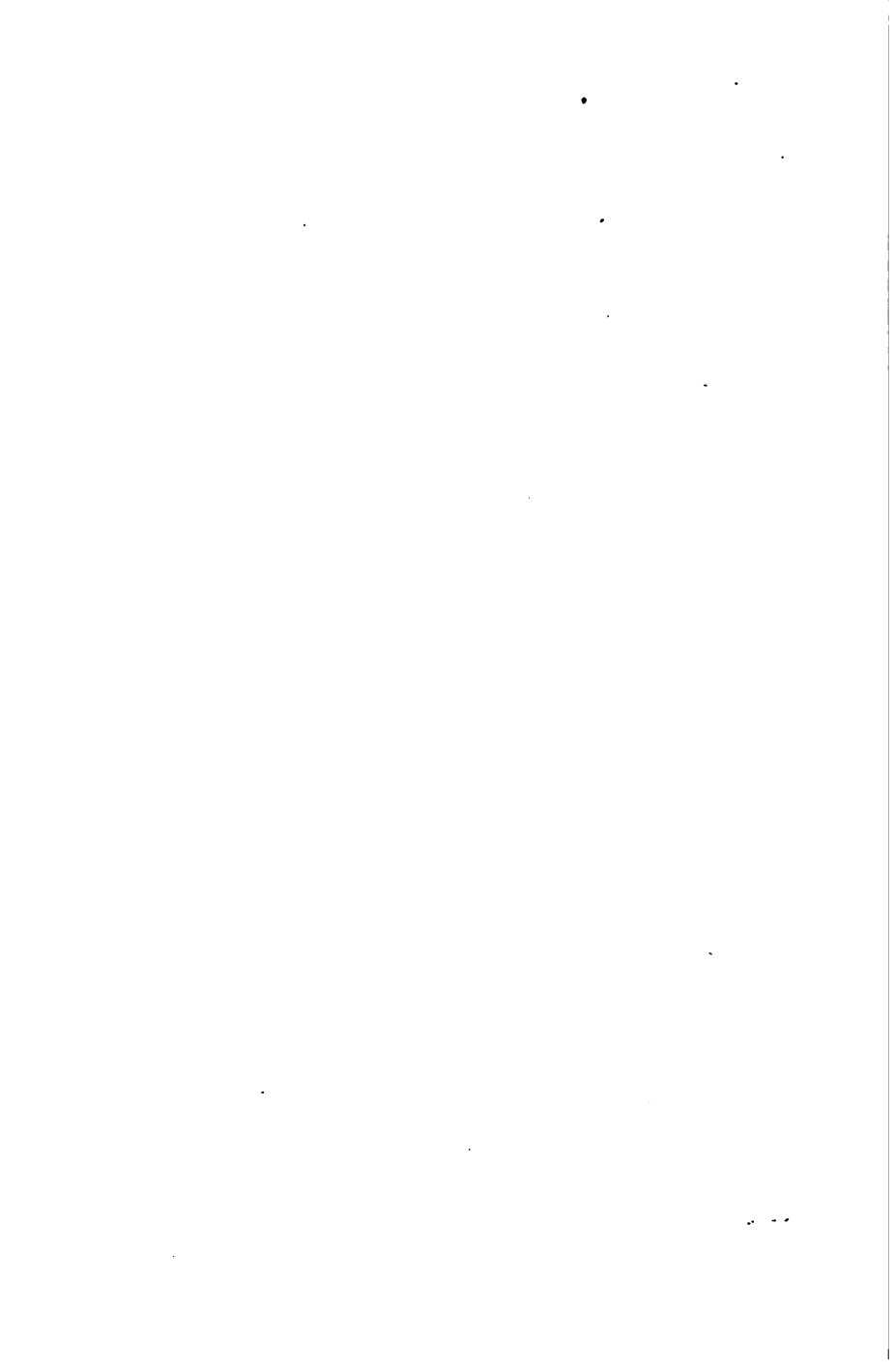
Dick Seaton is now a famous sculptor, and makes a handsome income, I am told, by his art. Miss O'Grady often visits him and his wife, and I see her from time to time; but she has a poor opinion of me. A little energy on my part, she says, might have saved the Paolini property, and defeated the Cardinal and Lady Augusta at one blow. She has never been able to pardon me for the failure of this pretty design; but I don't know that anybody would have been much the happier had it succeeded.

Mrs. Seaton—she dropped her title when she married again—is one of the most agreeable and popular women in London. Everybody unites in singing her praises; but, for my own part, handsome as she is, and charming as

she is, I shall never be able to feel quite the same interest in her, in these days of her prosperity, that I did in the beautiful, unfortunate Princess Paolini.

COUNT WALDEMAR





## *COUNT WALDEMAR.*

### I.

It was in Homburg that I first met him. I had finished the noonday breakfast which I always take at the Kursaal, and was sitting on the terrace in front of that establishment, smoking the one morning cigar allowed me by my doctor, and contemplating with indolent satisfaction the sunny gardens before me and all the soft lights and shades that lay upon the distant woods, when he came clattering down the steps of the restaurant in his tight blue hussar uniform, his Hessian boots, and flat forage-cap, and, pulling up suddenly within a few paces of my chair, began to slap his breast and rummage in his scanty coat-tail pockets in

search of something which was evidently not to be found there. He was a tall, handsome young fellow, with clear blue eyes and a fair moustache, a young fellow of a type by no means uncommon in the German army; but something—I don't know whether it was his size, or his good looks, or a prophetic instinct—attracted my attention to him at once. A slight cloud overspread his features as he realised the futility of his search, and for a moment or two he seemed uncertain what to do next; but presently, becoming aware of the scrutiny of an elderly Englishman of benevolent aspect, he cheered up, as with a sudden inspiration, and approaching me in a couple of strides, raised his right hand to the side of his cap, bowed very low from the waist, and gratified me with one of the brightest smiles I had ever seen upon a human countenance.

‘I have done a most stupid thing,’ said he, speaking with a strong German accent, but

without hesitation or a shadow of embarrassment; 'I have left my *cigarren-étui* at the hotel. Dare I give myself the liberty to ask if you have a cigar to spare in your pocket?'

Of course I handed him my case without further ado. I suppose that no man living could be churl enough to refuse such a request; but I was amused by it nevertheless; for it was one that an Englishman would have died rather than address to a total stranger; and indeed the article required was to be purchased close at hand in the Kursaal restaurant, where my esteemed friend M. Chevet keeps some of the choicest brands.

The young officer, however, had his reasons for not choosing to avail himself of this convenient proximity, and disclosed them with engaging candour, after taking a light from me.

'Now this is a very goot cigar,' he was kind enough to remark, seating himself astride upon an iron chair. 'If I would buy such a

one by Chevet, I would have to pay a mark for him. One mark—yes, that is what they have asked me last night—it is unheard of! For you Englishmen, who pay without bargaining, that is very well; but we Germans' (*Chairmans* he pronounced it) 'are not such fool—I mean, we know better what is the fair price.'

His ease of manner was simply inimitable; I have never seen anything like it before or since. It arose, I imagine, from the unsuspecting goodwill towards the world at large which makes children who are not afflicted with shyness such charming companions. I was delighted with him. He chatted away so pleasantly and amusingly for a quarter of an hour that I was quite sorry when a formidable posse of comrades in arms—dragoons, uhlans, husears, and I know not what other specimens of the Imperial German cavalry—came clanking along the terrace, and carried him off with

them. Before this he had given me his card, which bore the name of Count Waldemar von Ravensburg; had informed me that he held a lieutenant's commission in a Würtemberg hussar regiment, and was in Homburg for the purpose of riding in some proposed military steeple-chases; and had strongly advised me to dine that evening at the Hessischer Hof, where he said I should get good German fare, greatly superior to the spurious French cooking of the more fashionable hotels.

‘I shall be dining there myself mit all my friends,’ he added, by way of final inducement.

Under ordinary circumstances such a consideration as this would have sufficed of itself to drive me elsewhere in search of my evening sustenance; for sincerely as I appreciate the many amiable social qualities of German officers, I know what these gentlemen are when a number of them get together, and I am fond neither of being deafened nor of having to

bellow like a skipper in a gale of wind in order to make my own remarks audible. But I had taken such a fancy to Count Waldemar, he struck me as so genial and original a type of fellow-creature, that I was loth to lose an opportunity of prosecuting my acquaintance with him : and accordingly the dinner-hour (half-past five) found me at the door of the little Hessischer Hof.

A most cacophonous din burst upon my ears, as I entered, from an assemblage of spurred and uniformed warriors, who, as the manner of their nation is, were exchanging civilities in accents suggestive of furious indignation. My young hussar detached himself from the group, greeted me with the warmth of an old friend, and presented me to each of his comrades in turn :

‘ Meestr Cleefford—Herr von Blechow, Herr von Rochow, Herr von Katzow, Herr von Wallwitz, Herr von Zedlitz, Herr von Zezschwitz, ’ &c.

&c. Perhaps these were not their names; indeed, now I come to think of it, I believe they ran into considerably more syllables; but it does not much matter. They were all very polite, and indeed were as pleasant and jovial a set of youths as one could wish to meet. During dinner the conversation turned chiefly upon races and steeplechases, giving opportunity for many thrilling anecdotes, and with our dessert we had some sweet champagne, over which we grew very merry and noisy.

When it was all over, Count Waldemar hooked his arm within mine, and in this familiar fashion we strolled out into the street, where (for it was early in August) broad daylight still reigned, and slant sunrays from the west streamed upon the long row of yellow droschkes with their patient, net-covered horses, upon the shiny hats of the drivers, upon the trim orange-trees in their green tubs, and upon the distinguished visitors—English almost exclusively—



who, by twos and threes, were slowly wending their way towards the terrace, where the band would soon strike up. Gusts of cool, fresh air were sweeping down from the blue Taunus range, setting the little flags upon the Kursaal fluttering, and banging a shutter here and there. Imagine to yourself a stalwart young hussar, moving with that modicum of swagger from which no cavalry man that ever lived is quite free, and which very tight clothes render to some extent compulsory upon their wearer imagine, arm-in-arm with him, an Englishman of something under middle height and something over middle age, clad in a grey frock-coat and trousers and tall white hat, and you will have before your mind's eye a picture which, I grieve to think, is not wholly wanting in elements of the ridiculous.

I have reason to believe that the droschke-drivers saw it in this light; I fear that my compatriots did; I know that I did myself.

But I am perfectly sure that the excellent Count Waldemar was not only free from the faintest suspicion that our appearance could provoke a smile, but that he never could have been brought to understand in the least why it should do so. No one could laugh louder or longer than he, upon occasion ; but then he must have something to laugh at ; and it would have been impossible to convince him that there could be any joke in the simple fact of two gentlemen walking together arm-in-arm. He was in all things the most completely unselfconscious mortal I have ever known.

For my own part, I am not ashamed to confess—or rather I *am* ashamed, but do confess—that the notion of being promenaded up and down the terrace, under the eyes of all my friends and acquaintances, by this long-legged and rather loud-voiced young officer alarmed me so much that I was fain to insist upon leading him down one of the more

secluded alleys. He did not want to walk that way ; he said we should neither hear the music nor see the people there ; but I pointed out to him that it would be impossible for me to give my whole attention to his conversation in a crowd ; and so, being a most good-natured soul, he yielded, and went on chatting about Stuttgart, and his regiment, and his brother-officers, and his horses, in all of which subjects he seemed to think that I must be greatly interested. And so indeed I was—or, at least, in his treatment of them.

Just as we reached the point where the Untere Promenade crosses the Kursaal gardens we were met by a party of English people—an old lady, three young ones, and a couple of men carrying shawls—who came up the steps talking and laughing, and passed on towards the band. I should not have noticed them particularly had not a sudden convulsive jerk of my captive arm made me aware that my

companion had some reason for feeling moved by their vicinity. The manner in which he paused, and, gazing after them, profoundly sighed, would have sufficiently revealed the nature of that reason, even if he had intended to conceal it—which of course he did not.

‘Now I shall tell you something,’ said he, with an air of confidential candour all his own. ‘The lady you see there—the tall one who is walking alone—it is she whom I mean to make my wife.’

‘Indeed?’ I answered. ‘I am sorry, then, that I did not look at her more closely. May I venture to ask her name?’

‘Ah, diess I cannot just tell you. But it begins mit an S—that I know; for I have seen the monogram upon her fan.’

‘Your love affair is not very far advanced then?’

‘Advanced? no; it is not yet commenced; but that is no matter. I have three whole

days more to spend here, and in three days one may do much. Oh, and we do not see one another now for the first time. Last summer we have met in a bath.'

'In a bath?' I echoed, rather startled.

'You do not say bath—no? Well, in a watering-place. It is true that I have not been able to make myself acquaint mit her; but my eyes have spoken. I think she has perhaps understood. And now I was thinking at dinner that *you* might present me.'

'To the lady? My dear sir, I should like nothing better; but unfortunately I never saw her before in my life.'

'*Versteht sich!* that is no difficulty. You are English—she is English; you have friends here who will certainly know her.'

I interrupted my impetuous companion by observing that he was evidently under some misapprehension as to the social relations of the English abroad. Even upon the doubtful

supposition that the unknown lady and I had some common acquaintance in Homburg, it by no means followed that I could venture to request an introduction to her for myself—still less for a friend.

‘Besides,’ I added, ‘all sorts of people travel nowadays: this lady may be a duchess, or she may be a tailor’s daughter. In the first case, you see, she would probably decline to have anything to say to me; and in the second I should not particularly care about knowing her.’

He appeared to be rather surprised than shaken by these objections. For a few seconds he contemplated me wonderingly, stroking his moustache, and murmuring, ‘What a pitee!’ but his self-confidence was not long in returning to him.

‘Never mind!’ he resumed cheerfully; ‘we must make the attempt—that can do no harm. You will try to make yourself pre-

sented to her to-night, and if you succeed, you will present me to-morrow morning.'

I don't think it struck him for a moment that there was anything cool in this proposal. He uttered it in the most matter-of-fact tone in the world, patted me encouragingly on the shoulder, and then, remarking that Herr von Wallwitz would be waiting for him, said he would leave me to accomplish my mission. I afterwards found that he was in the habit of issuing his behests in this calm manner, and that, somehow or other, they were generally obeyed.

Whether it was owing to the power of Count Waldemar's reliance upon human friendliness, or to the pliancy of my own nature, which has led me into many a scrape first and last, I can't say; but certain it is that in this instance he gained his point. For, as chance would have it, the very first person whom I met on returning to the terrace, where the

lamps were now lighted, and where the fashionable world of Homburg was gossiping, flirting, and promenading to the accompaniment of an excellent band, was little Tommy Tufnell, who knows, or says he knows, everybody from the Prince of Wales downwards; and as, immediately after this encounter, I happened to espy the fair unknown sitting in the midst of a circle of friends, I took the opportunity to ask my companion whether he could give me any information about her, at the same time expressing a careless wish to make her acquaintance. Tommy, of course, knew her perfectly well—most intimately, in fact—had known her people all his life. ‘She was a Miss Grey—Warwickshire Greys, you know,’ he observed explanatorily. He further informed me that she was a widow, and that her present name was Seymour. ‘Married poor Jack Seymour of the 25th Hussars,’ he continued. ‘You remember Jack, of course.



No? Ah, well, he was a baddish lot, poor fellow. Broke his neck out hunting—just as well perhaps. Had D. T. twice, and was not over and above kind to his wife, I'm afraid. She is here with her aunt, Mrs. Grey, and her cousins—charming people. Come along, and I'll introduce you. Upon my word, Clifford, you old fellows!—when you get away from your wives, and come abroad on the loose, there's no end to the games you're up to. All safe with me, you know—shan't say anything about it to Mrs. Clifford,' adds the facetious Tommy, wagging his head and nudging me after a favourite fashion of his, which I am quite sure he would abandon if he only knew how very much I dislike it.

Presently I was making my best bow before the little group of ladies above mentioned. The two young men whom I had seen entering the gardens with them stopped talking and stared, evidently wondering what the

deuce this tiresome old fogey wanted ; but as I showed no disposition to interrupt their respective flirtations with the pretty Miss Greys, they soon began to whisper again, and cease to notice me. Tufnell obligingly engaged Mrs. Grey, a stout, good-humoured-looking old person, in an animated discussion as to the effect of the Homburg waters upon suppressed gout ; and Mrs. Seymour withdrew a corner of her dress from a chair which stood conveniently at her side. I availed myself of the tacit permission thus conveyed, and dropped into it, profiting by the light of an adjacent gas-lamp to survey at my leisure the lady who had made so facile a conquest of Count Waldemar.

I saw a slim but well-proportioned figure, clad in a handsome silk dress, the cut of which, even to my masculine eyes, betrayed the hand of an artist—a face neither beautiful nor plain, surmounted by a profusion of little fair curls

arranged, according to the fashion of the day, so as to conceal the forehead, a picturesque hat, a pair of diamond solitaire earrings—upon the whole a person completely unremarkable, but at the same time (to use an adjective which I abhor, but cannot replace) decidedly stylish. Why any one should have fallen in love with Mrs. Seymour at first sight it was not very easy to understand, though, taking her altogether, she made a favourable impression upon me. She had a frank, pleasant smile and clear grey eyes, and talked away agreeably enough, in an easy conventional way, about Homburg, about the recent Goodwood meeting, the latest scandal, and what not. In short, she was so exactly like everybody else that I had no hesitation in crediting her with just so much of good nature, common sense, selfishness, and solid principle as are required to make up a well-balanced character, nor any doubt but that she would be quite the last woman in the world

to marry a scatterbrained German hussar, after a courtship of three days' duration.

She bowed or nodded to so many of the passers-by, during the time that I was sitting beside her, that I formed a shrewd guess that, among the many obstacles which seemed to lie in the path of my audacious friend, that most formidable one of wealth was not likely to be wanting. Later in the evening I again came across Tommy Tufnell in the Kursaal, whither I had repaired to have a look at the young people dancing before I went to bed, and I took occasion to question him upon this point.

'Oh yes, she is very well off,' answered Tommy, carelessly; 'that is, comfortably off, you know—three or four thousand a year, or something like that, I should think, and no children. It would have been more if poor Seymour had gone over to the majority a little sooner. He always lived beyond his income, and latterly he lost rather heavily on the turf.'

Mentally summing up, as I walked home, all that I had heard and seen of Mrs. Seymour, I came to the conclusion that to introduce Count Waldemar to her would be merely to cause disappointment to him, annoyance to her, and inconvenience to myself; and I therefore determined that I would do nothing of the sort. Had I been a little better acquainted with the young Würtemberger, I should not have made this resolution; for I subsequently discovered him to be one of those people who invariably get their own way, whereas I, for some occult reason, seldom or never get mine.

When I went down to the springs at half-past seven next morning, in obedience to the rule laid down for me by my doctor, whom should I see approaching the Elisabethen-Brunnen but Mrs. Seymour. She looked very nice and fresh in her cotton dress, and saluted me with a friendly nod and smile. Side by side we drained our bitter draught, and then, as

neither of us was provided with a companion, we could not well help turning away to go through the prescribed twenty minutes of moderate exercise together. We took our way down the shady avenue so familiar to Englishmen, while the morning sun streamed through the leaves above our heads, throwing long blue shadows from the trees across the dewy grass of the park, while the throng of water-drinkers tramped steadily up and down, and the bandsmen in their kiosk scraped and tootled away as merrily as if they really enjoyed making melody at that unnatural hour. Half London met or passed us as we walked. Peers and tradesmen, judges and generals, members of Parliament and members of the Stock Exchange, they plodded on—they, their wives and their daughters—a queer miscellany of Anglo-Saxon samples, without a single German, barring H.S.H. the Grand Duke of Halbacker, among them. I had just pointed out this

remarkable circumstance to my fair companion when a sudden grip of my left arm above the elbow warned me that I had spoken too hastily. Here, sure enough, was a German, and one who had no notion of being ignored either.

‘Goot morning!’ he cried cheerily. ‘Now this is a very fortunate thing, that I just happen to meet you.’

I was not quite so sure of that; but I answered him civilly, and he hooked himself on to me without any ceremony. I resumed my conversation with Mrs. Seymour, and after we had progressed a few yards Count Waldemar began poking me with his elbow in a way which I understood, but did not choose to notice. Finding these gentle hints of no avail, he followed them up presently by such a tremendous blow in my ribs that I positively staggered under it. I looked up at him reproachfully, shook my head, and tried to form with my lips the words, ‘Can’t be done.’

Will explain afterwards.' But it was no good.

'I hear not one wort von wass you say,' was his response, delivered in stentorian tones; after which he continued, without lowering his voice in the least, 'Will you not do me the honour to present me to madame?'

What could I do?

'Mrs. Seymour, will you allow me to introduce Count Waldemar von Ravensburg,' says I, perhaps a little sulkily; and I noticed that a mischievous gleam of amusement swept across the lady's face as she returned Count Waldemar's profound bow. No doubt he had been making eyes at her with that thoroughness of purpose which distinguished his every deed.

Now that I had acted contrary to my better judgment, and done what was required of me, it obviously remained only that I should take myself off; and indeed it was time for my second glass of water. So, when we had



reached the Elisabethen-Brunnen, whither we all three returned together, I judiciously caught sight of a friend, and slipped away.

While listening to the complaints of old Mr. Porteous upon the subject of his gouty toes, I kept an eye upon the Count and the widow, who were sustaining an animated dialogue on the further side of the spring. I saw her finish her potion; I saw him seize the empty glass, hand it to the attendant maiden to be refilled, and drain it with a gusto for which the inherent properties of the water were hardly sufficient to account; I saw him repeat this foolhardy action twice—thrice, and then walk away at Mrs. Seymour's side as coolly as you please. I believe he would have pocketed the tumbler, like Sir Walter Scott, had not his uniform been far too tight to permit of such a proceeding.

Merciful powers! three glasses of Elisabethen straight off the reel! And I who am

allowed but two; and must walk about for twenty minutes after the first, and for an hour after the second, under peril of I know not what awful consequences! I took a couple of turns along the avenue beside Porteous's bath-chair, and then concluded my walk in the company of some other fellow-sufferers; but I heard little of what they said, for I could not take my eyes off that young man. I watched him as the islanders watched St. Paul of old, waiting for tardy Nemesis to overtake him, and I was almost disappointed to see that he came out of the ordeal as scathless as the apostle. My faith in my favourite spring received a blow that morning from which it has never fully recovered. Meanwhile the unconscious disturber of my peace was to all appearance getting on at a great pace with Mrs. Seymour. Their conversation did not appear to flag for a moment; and every now and then the sound of his laughter reached my

ears above the din of the band, the shuffling of footsteps, and the buzz of many voices. Such a jolly, joyous laugh as it was! No snigger, nor cackle, nor half-smothered outburst, but a fine rich ho-ho-ho! as natural and irrepressible as the song of a bird, and, to my ears, nearly as musical. I declare that, if I had been a woman, I should have felt three-parts inclined to marry Count Waldemar for the mere sake of his laugh, knowing that it could only proceed from the most manly and honest of hearts.

He caught me up after I had set my face homewards, and clapped me on the shoulder with much warmth. 'You are my very good friend,' he was good enough to say. 'I shall never forget wass you have done for me.'

'You have nothing to thank me for. I should not have introduced you if you had not forced me into doing so,' I replied candidly 'The truth is, there is no chance for you. I

know my countrywomen better than you can do, and I assure you that, though Mrs. Seymour may find it amusing enough to hear you talk, she will no more think of accepting your offer (if you are foolish enough to make her one) than she would of drinking three glasses of mineral water, highly charged with carbonic acid gas, because your lips happened to touch the rim of the tumbler.'

'Now, that we shall see,' he rejoined, in no way disconcerted.

'Setting aside the question of your nationality and of her very slight acquaintance with you,' I continued, 'I must tell you that she is a woman of considerable fortune.'

'Ja—so?' quoth he, quite imperturbably. 'That is all the better; for I am myself a poor man. Money brings not happiness, but it is no bad addition to happiness.'

The perfect good faith with which this copybook maxim was enunciated was in its

way inimitable. It was clearly absurd to waste more words upon one so ignorant of the first guiding principles of civilised society, so I went home to breakfast.

## II.

I AM one of those who look back with regret to the palmy old days of MM. Blanc and Bénazet. I never could see that the interests of public morality required the suppression of the gaming-tables, nor, for that matter, that it is the legitimate province of Governments to look after the morals of law-abiding people at all. It has always seemed to me that, if I had gambling propensities, it would be far better for me to indulge them in public than in private. Those who stake against the Bank play with an adversary who at least has no cards up his sleeve, who expects no 'revenge' from a winner, who neither takes nor offers I O U's, who gains without unseemly exultation, and may be 'broken' without being ruined.

Of course I know all about the clerks who used to rob their masters' tills, and the peasants whose hardly earned wages used to disappear on Saturday nights over the green cloth; but an obligatory deposit of twenty pounds or so, to be returned on the departure of the visitor, would have effectually excluded these simple folks; and really, if our rulers are to begin protecting us against ourselves, where are they to stop? Why should we not be forbidden to back a horse, or to invest our money in South American securities, or to go out in wet weather without an umbrella and cork soles?

I feel the more free to say all this inasmuch as neither M. Blanc nor M. Bénazet ever made a single thaler out of me, except in indirect ways. It is not from any love of *trente et quarante* or *roulette* in themselves that I would fain see a restoration of those merry monarchs, but because their little kingdoms, which were once so joyous, are now left desolate, or nearly

so. Their flower-gardens are growing less flowery every year ; their well-mown lawns are well-mown no longer ; their paths are grass-grown, or strewed with falling leaves ; their *prime donne* and Parisian actors find more lucrative summer engagements elsewhere ; the very gilding on their palace walls is beginning to tarnish, and will, perhaps, not be renewed ; for where is the money to come from ?

Homburg, it is true, is more highly favoured than its neighbours, fashion having chosen to decree of late years that it should be the proper thing for the English great world to repair thither for a time at the close of the London season ; and I must confess that now, when I do my annual three weeks of water-drinking, I mix in a more aristocratic as well as more respectable society than of yore. But then it is a considerably duller one. With the exception of lawn-tennis and dancing, neither of which relaxations are altogether suitable to



the age of a majority of the *curgäste*, Homburg is somewhat wanting in amusements in these latter days; and I suppose that is why everybody was so determined to be present at the steeplechases mentioned to me by Count Waldemar, that, on the appointed day, there was not a carriage to be had in the town for love or money. I myself was glad enough to accept the offer of a box-seat from some friends; for, anxious though I was to see how my new friend would acquit himself in the saddle, I had no idea of trudging two or three miles under a blazing sun for that or any other purpose.

The improvised course was pleasantly situated upon a slope of the Taunus mountains, commanding a wide view of the rolling plain on which Homburg stands, of yellow cornfields and waving woods, and the spires of Frankfort glittering in the distance. Mounted policemen in spiked helmets were galloping hither and thither without any ostensible object; flags

were fluttering, a military band was in full blast ; a large concourse of country people in holiday garb lined the hillside, and a triple row of carriages, displaying much quaint variety in build, was drawn up in the neighbourhood of the winning-post.

In one of the latter I soon made out Mrs. Seymour, of whom, after the exchange of a few commonplaces, I could not forbear from inquiring her opinion of Herr von Ravensburg. She laughed heartily, as at some diverting reminiscence.

‘ Charming ! ’ she replied. ‘ Thank you so very much for introducing him to me. I don’t know when I have met any one who has made me laugh so much.’

I doubted whether this were exactly the impression the young gentleman had intended to produce, and I said so.

‘ He does not intend to produce any impression at all,’ answered Mrs. Seymour.

quite follow her quick repartees. More than once I caught him gazing at her with a look of troubled bewilderment in his blue eyes, which gradually melted into a smile as reflection brought him a clue to her meaning.

‘ Ah, you was laughing at me,’ he would exclaim, breaking into one of his own hearty peals at this remarkable discovery. And then fat Mrs. Grey would laugh too, without knowing why ; and so by degrees we all became very friendly and merry.

In the meantime the afternoon was wearing on. The three first events on the card—steeplechases they called them, but the obstacles to be surmounted were not of a very formidable kind—were disposed of, and the time was approaching for the great race of the day, in which Count Waldemar was to take part. We all wished him success when he left us, and, as he hurried away, I noticed that he was twirling between his finger and thumb a white rose

very much resembling a cluster of those flowers which Mrs. Seymour wore in the front of her dress.

After a short delay the riders came out, and thundered past us, one by one—a yellow cap and jacket steering a big-boned, fiddle-headed roan ; a blue jacket and black sleeves struggling with a chestnut who seemed a little too much for him ; then some half-dozen others, whose colours, to tell the truth, I have forgotten, and likewise their horses. Last of all Count Waldemar cantered by, mounted on a little brown horse whose looks did not take the fancy of the ladies. Nor, for that matter, were they much better satisfied with the appearance of the Count himself. He wore his uniform—a queer costume, certainly, in which to ride a race—and what had he done with that white rose but stuck it in the side of his flat cap, where, I must confess, it looked excessively absurd and conspicuous. Mrs. Seymour was

not a little annoyed, I think, by this bold advertisement of her favour, but she was too much a woman of the world to make mountains out of molehills. However, she unfastened her own roses from her dress, and tossed them into the hood of the carriage, saying plainly that she did not wish to be laughed at by all Homburg.

I am not a sporting man myself, and should never think of trusting to my own judgment in a matter of horseflesh. Therefore, although I was by no means so displeased as my companions with Count Waldemar's mount, I did not venture to say anything to excite their hopes until I had consulted a racing man of my acquaintance, whom I found near the judge's box, surveying the scene with hat cocked and arms akimbo, patronage, not unmingled with disdain, expressed in his gaze.

'Good wear-and-tear little nag. Might win, I should say, over a long course like this,

if his owner knows how to ride him,' was the verdict of this oracle. 'The roan's the favourite, they tell me, but Lord bless you! looking at a horse'll never show you what he can do, especially with these fellows up. Lay you six sovereigns to four against the little brown, if you like, just to give the thing an interest, you know.'

Modestly accepting this offer, I returned to tell Mrs. Seymour that I thought our man had as good a chance as anybody, and had just time to clamber up on to the box of her carriage and get out my field-glasses before a start was effected.

As I have already intimated, I have no pretension to say in what manner a race should or should not be ridden; but, dear me, the pace at which those young men dashed off, and the way they rushed at their fences! The yellow jacket took the lead, and kept it; the others were all together, a couple of lengths or so

behind him—whipping and spurring, some of them, before they had accomplished a fourth of the distance. I was glad to see Count Waldemar lying well in the rear of this charge of cavalry, sitting still in his saddle, and evidently biding his time, like a sensible man. His little horse, with whom he seemed to be upon terms of perfect mutual understanding, popped over the fences cleverly enough, and looked full of running.

The race was twice round the course, and when the first circuit had been completed it was clear to the most inexperienced eye that there were only three horses in it—the roan, the chestnut, and the brown.

Of the remaining competitors, one had gone the wrong side of a flag, and had pulled up, two had come to grief, and the others were hopelessly beaten. The roan was still ahead; the chestnut, all in a lather, was separated from

him by a few lengths; and the brown was a little farther behind than I quite liked to see him. Now, however, he began to creep slowly up; at every jump he perceptibly gained ground, and before very long secured the second place. This order of going was maintained up to the last fence, over which yellow-jacket lifted the roan as if it had been a five-barred gate instead of a modest little hurdle. Count Waldemar slipped past him while he was still in the air, and cantered in without once lifting his whip,

‘I am *so* glad!’ cried Mrs. Seymour, as soon as she could make her voice heard above the acclamations that greeted this finish. ‘He did ride well—did not he, Mr. Clifford?’

‘Couldn’t have ridden better,’ I responded heartily, thinking of my six pounds and of the knowingness I had displayed in picking out the winner. ‘You see I was not very far wrong.’



I must say for myself that, though I don't profess to know much about racing, I have a pretty good eye for a horse, and——'

'Oh, but it wasn't the horse at all,' interrupted Mrs. Seymour rather unkindly. 'Anybody could see that that ugly little thing would have had no chance whatever if your friend had not ridden so perfectly. I wonder whether he is very much pleased.'

'He looks so, at all events,' remarked Mrs. Grey.

In truth the countenance of the victor, who was just now being led away in triumph by a crowd of his comrades, wore an expression of delight which he made no attempt to conceal. He had dropped his reins, and was throwing his arms about and talking eagerly, evidently explaining what the nature of his tactics had been, while all his features literally beamed with glee. Those who have happened to observe the face of a very small boy who has

astonished everybody by a clever catch at cricket will have some idea of Count Waldemar as he appeared in this moment of success. Only to look at him did one's heart good, and, as I watched him, I rejoiced more than ever in his victory, for I saw then how dreadfully disappointed he would have been if he had lost.

It is hardly necessary to relate how he eventually reappeared beside Mrs. Seymour's carriage, how he was received by the ladies with warm congratulations, and how every incident in the race had to be recorded in detail. I, for my part, having said what was proper, benevolently took away Mrs. Grey to look at the water-jump, perceiving that, if Count Waldemar was ever to make any impression upon the heart of the widow, now would be his opportunity.

No doubt he made good use of his time. I left the racecourse without seeing him again ;

but happening to dine that evening at the Kursaal, I had the satisfaction of witnessing from afar a well-attended and somewhat uproarious banquet, at which he was the chief guest, and which was given, the waiter told me, by the *Herren Offiziere* who had taken part in the steeplechases. A silver cup of surpassing hideousness, displayed in the middle of the table, was, my informant added, the trophy won by the hero of the day; the Herr Graf's health was about to be proposed, and doubtless he would make a speech in reply. Distance debarred me from enjoying the Herr Graf's eloquence; but judging from the applause it elicited, I concluded that it was worthy of him and of the occasion, and I observed with pleasure that his high spirits had not deserted him.

While I was drinking my cup of black coffee in the open air afterwards, he came out and joined me, as I had half expected that he would

do. I asked him whether closer inspection had lessened his admiration of my countrywoman's charms, and he said, Not at all. On the contrary, he was more than ever convinced that he was now in love for the first and only time in his life, and more than ever determined that Mrs. Seymour should, ere long, change her name for that of Gräfin von Ravensburg. At the same time he gave me to understand that love had not blinded him to certain imperfections in the lady of his choice. He took exception to sundry tricks of voice and gesture, which, with a German's instinct for spying out the infinitely little, he had remarked in her ; he pronounced her to be too *emancipirt*, by which, I take it, he meant 'fast,' and feared that the poetical side of her nature had not been sufficiently developed. But these, after all, he concluded, stretching out his long legs, and blowing a cloud of smoke into the still evening air, were but trifles, which marriage, and a residence in

the cultured society of Stuttgardt, would soon correct.

‘Do you know,’ said I, ‘I think you are about the most conceited young man I ever came across?’

He opened his eyes in genuine amazement.

‘Conceited!’ he cried; ‘now that has never been said of me before. What for do you call me conceited?’

I pointed out to him that modest men do not, as a rule, expect ladies to fall in love with them at first sight.

‘Ah, that is your English notion. You consider yourselves the first nation in the world, and yet it is rare that you will find an Englishman who does not affect to speak against his country. That you call modesty, but I think it is a great foolishness, for you do not mean wass you say. And so mit other things. I do not expect as every lady shall fall in love with me—no! But one—that is

another thing. If it has happened to me to love her, why should she not love me? I am very sure that your wife has loved you before she has married you.'

'An impartial study of Mrs. Clifford's character during some twenty years of married life would have led me to form a somewhat different conclusion,' I answered; 'but doubtless you know best. I can assure you, however, that I have never had the audacity to offer marriage to anybody within a week of my first meeting with her.'

'Perhaps,' said he gravely, 'you have never met the lady whom Gott has meant to be your wife. If you had, you would know that it is of no importance whether a man shall speak in two days or in two years. For me, I have no choice. I must join my regiment tomorrow, and so it is necessary that I declare myself to-night.'

‘And pray how are you going to find your opportunity?’

‘Ah, for that I have had to employ a little diplomacy,’ he answered, pronouncing the word ‘*diplomacee*,’ with a strong emphasis upon the last syllable, and accompanying it with a look of profound cunning which I would not have missed for worlds. ‘I have arranged to meet these ladies at the band, and to show them the race-cup, which, as you know, is in the restaurant. Now, diess is my plan. I join them when they are already seated, and I say: “One lady will be so kind and keep the chairs while I take the other indoors.” I take Mrs. Seymour first, and then—you understand.’

He went off presently to carry out this wily stratagem, having first promised to call at my hotel early the next morning, and let me hear the result of his attempt.

Somehow or other I could not help fancying that there might be a chance for him.

Women like youth and good looks and proficiency in manly sports and a pretty uniform, and Mrs. Seymour was rich enough to indulge in a caprice. I had taken so strong a liking to the young fellow myself during the three days of our intimacy that it did not seem to me an absolute impossibility that a lady should have fallen in love with him within as brief a period. I ought of course to have known better. I ought to have remembered that we do not live in an age of romantic marriages and love at first sight, and to have foreseen that Mrs. Seymour would receive the young German's declaration exactly as ninety-nine women out of any hundred would do; but I suppose Count Waldemar's self-confidence must have slightly disturbed the balance of my judgment; and besides, I am always more prone to look at the sentimental side of things after dark than during the daytime.

With the return of morning my common



sense recovered its sway, and I was not surprised when my breakfast was interrupted by the entrance of Count Waldemar, with a rather long face and a confession of failure upon his lips. He was disappointed, but far from despairing, and assured me that he had no intention of accepting this check as a final defeat.

‘I have been reflecting all night in my inside,’ he said ; ‘and I perceive that I have been too hasty. No matter !—*aufgeschoben ist nicht aufgehoben*, as we say—to delay is not to break off. I shall meet her again, and then I shall know better how to act.’

And so, with a hearty shake of the hand at parting, and a cordial invitation to beat up his quarters at Stuttgardt if ever my wanderings should lead me that way, he set off for the railway station.

## III.

SHORTLY afterwards I myself left Homburg, having completed the period of my 'cure'; and if at the end of a week I had not quite forgotten Count Waldemar and Mrs. Seymour, I had at all events ceased to think about them and their destinies. On one's way through the world one is for ever catching glimpses of disconnected dramas—the opening of a farce, the second act of a comedy, the tail of a tragedy. Accident interests us for a time in the doings and sufferings of the actors, and accident hurries them out of sight and out of mind again, with their stories half told.

Accident it was—or destiny, I can't say which; certainly it was not inclination—that

took me, in the autumn of that same year, to Hyères, in company with my wife, and Mrs. Seymour could give no more satisfactory explanation of her presence in that dull little winter station. I ran up against her, on the Place des Palmiers, a few days after my arrival; and if I had been Friday and she Robinson Crusoe, she could not have hailed me with a greater show of delight.

‘I am so very glad to see you!’ she exclaimed. ‘In an evil hour I made up my mind to winter in the south, and three weeks ago I came here with my cousin, Miss Grey, whom you may remember at Homburg; and now, after I have taken a villa for six months, we have discovered how cordially we hate the place. We know hardly anybody, we have nothing to do, and, in short, we are bored to death. I do hope you are going to spend the winter here.’

I said I did not think that I should be in Hyères very long, but that Mrs. Clifford, I believed, intended remaining for several months; after which I could hardly avoid adding that I hoped soon to have the pleasure of introducing my wife to Mrs. Seymour.

The truth is, that my satisfaction at meeting with that lady was tempered by some misgivings as to the probable nature of her reception by Mrs. Clifford, who is not a little particular in the matter of chance acquaintances, and who has never had any confidence at all in her husband's powers of discernment. In the present instance, however, my fears proved to be groundless; for when Mrs. Seymour came to call, it transpired, in the course of conversation, that before her marriage she had been one of the Warwickshire Greys (whoever they may be), and that, of course, made it all right. My wife pronounced her to be a really delightful

person, and declared emphatically that she already felt a sincere interest in her future welfare.

The full significance of the latter phrase, which at the time I thought rather uncalled for, did not strike me until a few days later. It had happened that, upon our arrival at the Hôtel d'Orient, we had found already installed there a certain young man named Balfour, a budding diplomatist with whom I am upon tolerably intimate terms, and whom I had been much astonished to discover spending his leave in a spot so remote from the charms of society. It was not until I had found out that he was in the habit of passing the greater part of his days and the whole of his evenings at Mrs. Seymour's pretty villa on the wooded hillside that my sagacity led me to suspect what Mrs. Clifford, with her finer feminine wit, had divined from the outset. Now, as this young man was a prime favourite with my wife

—for indeed he was connected with I know not how many noble houses—and as, owing to an unfortunate tardiness of birth for which he was in no way responsible, he had but a poor share of this world's gear, it was not difficult to understand that lady's benevolent anxiety with regard to Mrs. Seymour's prospective happiness.

I solemnly declare that I had no objection in the world to the scheme hinted at above. I simply took no interest in it at all, one way or the other. It had nothing to do with me, and I make it a rule never to interfere in my neighbours' affairs. And yet Mrs. Clifford avers to this day that I consistently opposed it; that I did so merely with the object of annoying her, and that certain vexatious events which subsequently occurred would never have taken place at all but for me. Of the injustice, not to say the absurdity, of these accusations, I will leave those to judge who shall have the patience to

peruse this narrative to its close. One thing, at all events, I can conscientiously affirm : that it never so much as entered my head to think of Count Waldemar in connection with the subject ; for how could I possibly foresee that a lieutenant of German hussars, quartered in remote Stuttgart, would appear in the extreme south of France without a moment's notice, and create all manner of discord and unpleasantness in our midst ? This, however, is precisely what happened.

It was a bitter cold evening in December. All day long a furious and icy *mistral* had been sweeping over the bare hills, driving clouds of dust before it, ripping branches from the olives and evergreen-oaks, chilling the poor exotic palms, bursting open windows, slamming doors, and irritating beyond all bearing the nerves of luckless strangers. I was sitting in the smoking-room of the hotel with young Balfour, cowering over a wood-fire, and be-

wailing the inclemency of this quasi-southern climate.

‘Is it for this,’ I moaned, ‘that we have left our comfortable London home at the mercy of a crew of unprincipled servants? Is it for this that I have sacrificed my club, and my rubber of whist, and the improving society of my friends? Is it for this that we have crossed the Channel in a gale of wind, and faced the miseries of the most comfortless railway journey in the whole world? Is it for this——’

‘There’s the omnibus come in from the station,’ interrupted Balfour. ‘More deluded unfortunates in search of warmth, I suppose. How they must be cursing their doctors!’

The front door was flung open, letting in a gust of cold air from without. A heavy trunk was let down with a bang upon the stone floor. Some noisy, cheerful person came stumping in, laughing and talking with the landlord,—



And fragments of his mighty voice  
Came rolling on the wind.

‘Not much wrong with *his* lungs, anyhow,’  
remarked Balfour.

Could I doubt for a moment the origin of that tremendous ho-ho-ho? It needed not the landlord’s smiling announcement that ‘*un ami à monsieur*’ had arrived; it needed not the sight of a stalwart, fur-enveloped figure following closely upon his heels to prepare me for the agonising grip of both hands, whereby Count Waldemar evinced his joy and surprise at this unexpected renewal of our friendly relations.

He sat down before the fire, stretched out his interminable legs, and explained that he had got a month’s leave of absence from his regiment. He entered at once into conversation with Balfour, and would have divulged the cause of his journey to Hyères in the course of the first five minutes if I had not

contrived to catch his eye, and check him by a succession of hideous grimaces. He acknowledged these signals by a wink of surpassing craftiness, and a laughing ejaculation of '*Schön! schön! Werde nicht mehr plaudern,*' which, seeing that Balfour speaks German as well as he does English, was not exactly calculated to allay any suspicions that might have begun to trouble that young gentleman's mind. Still, the evening passed off without any untoward incident, and that was really more than I had ventured to hope for at first.

The next morning I had to introduce the Count to Mrs. Clifford, and to this hour I cannot imagine how I could have been so insane as to tell her privately beforehand that he was related to the Grand Duke of Halbacker.

Sometimes I am almost tempted to think that even white lies—and this one, I do maintain, was of the most harmless order—

never prosper. My sole aim was to give my young friend a chance of securing Mrs. Clifford's goodwill; but, alas! the result achieved was the exact contrary of this. For Balfour, who, as I ought to have remembered, had served as attaché at more than one German Court, assured her that the Grand Duke had no such connections, and my lame explanation that I was always making mistakes about people, and that I must have been thinking of somebody else, did not avail to prevent her from setting down poor Count Waldemar as an impostor, and openly speaking of him as such to the other inmates of the hotel. Altogether it was a most unfortunate occurrence, and did me much harm in the estimation of those about me.

I have neither space nor desire to speak of the botheration which ensued; of the solemn warning which my wife thought fit to address to Mrs. Seymour; of the latter's appeal to the

person principally concerned, and of my own clumsy attempts to get out of an awkward predicament. The upshot of it all was that I believe I was looked upon, for some time, as more or less of a detected swindler by everybody, except, indeed, by my dear and excellent Count, who would never have understood the mean feeling which had led me to make him out a greater man than he was. Now the von Ravensburgs were of just so good descent as the Grand Dukes of Halbacker, he said; and if I had made a little mistake, who was the worse for it? 'Tell me, my dear Mrs. Seymour, why does Mrs. Cleefford go out of the room whenever I enter? Does she take me perhaps for a *peeck-pocket*?' He roared with laughter at this funny notion.

The matter-of-course way in which Mrs. Seymour had taken Count Waldemar's sudden appearance upon the scene puzzled me so much that at last I felt impelled to ask her

whether she had not been rather astonished to see him again.

‘Oh no,’ she answered quietly. ‘He has written to me several times since we parted at Homburg, and he always spoke in his letters of paying us a flying visit in the course of the winter.’

‘Oh, really?’ said I. ‘I didn’t know;’ and then I changed the subject.

A man does not reach my time of life, nor spend the best part of half a century principally in cultivating the society of his fellow-creatures, to be scandalised by the flirtations of a pretty woman. Consciousness of my own many infirmities has ever imposed upon me a large measure of toleration for those of others; and when all is said and done, flirting, taken in the abstract, is no very heinous offence. Nevertheless, Mrs. Seymour’s conduct in the present instance disappointed me. I had given her credit for less vanity and more consideration

for the feelings of her neighbours. Was it worth while to inflict an expensive and fruitless journey upon this innocent young German, to set a hitherto harmonious party by the ears, and to get me into trouble with Mrs. Clifford, merely for the amusement of playing off one admirer against another? I was really vexed with Mrs. Seymour, and all the more so because I had seen a good deal of her during my sojourn at Hyères, and had discovered the existence of many excellent qualities beneath her somewhat conventional exterior.

At the same time, I could not but admire the skill with which she contrived to receive both the young men every day, and yet so to arrange matters as that their visits should not clash. I myself, having so few sources of amusement at command in the place, strolled up to her villa pretty frequently, and invariably found one or other of the rivals there, but never the two of them together. There was

always some pretext, directly traceable to Mrs. Seymour's influence, for the dismissal of the absentee. Now it was Balfour who had taken Miss Grey out for a ride; now it was Count Waldemar who had kindly undertaken to execute a few commissions at Toulon, and who was to be driven back from the station by Mrs. Seymour in her pony-carriage. Sometimes the German, sometimes the Englishman, was sent down to the sea-shore, three miles away, to pick up the many-coloured shells which abound on that coast. I happen to have an elementary knowledge of conchology, and I had the curiosity to put a few questions to Mrs. Seymour on the subject, thereby convincing myself that if she knew a crustacean from a mollusk it was about as much as she did. She laughed when I taxed her with deliberate deceit, and frankly admitted that she had found it advisable to keep her friends as much as possible apart.

‘They did not get on well together from the first,’ she said; ‘and I think it is always so much better not to try and make people like each other unless they are inclined that way. Count Waldemar is much too good-natured to quarrel with anybody, but he has a way of criticising you to your face, and of contradicting you flatly if you do not happen to agree with him, which people who do not know him are sometimes apt to take amiss. And then, you know, he does rather monopolise the conversation. When he is in the room nobody else gets much chance of making himself heard, and Mr. Balfour, who is very well informed and clever, and all that, is accustomed to be listened to.’

‘Precisely so; and that, of course, is quite enough to account for two good fellows hating one another like poison,’ says I, with delicate irony.

‘Well, you know, Englishmen and for-



eigners hardly ever do manage to hit it off,' she answered, in the most innocent manner in the world ; ' but I should not say that they exactly hated one another.'

They did, though, or something very like it. Although, owing to the able tactics above alluded to, they seldom or never met at Mrs. Seymour's, every day brought them together half a dozen times at the Hôtel d'Orient ; and, to use Mrs. Clifford's epigrammatical expression, they never fell in with one another without falling out. She, of course, laid all the blame of this unpleasantness upon Count Waldemar, whereas I was inclined to think that Balfour had been the original aggressor : but I must confess that at the end of a week there was not a pin to choose between them. Each did his best to be objectionable to the other, and in so doing succeeded in being a most decided nuisance to everybody else.

In my capacity of neutral I had more

opportunities than I cared about of hearing both sides of the question.

‘Of all the offensive bores I ever met,’ Balfour would exclaim, ‘that long-legged German friend of yours is the most irrepresible. I can’t understand how a fellow can be so intrusive. It is easy to see that poor Mrs. Seymour is tired to death of him; but I suppose she doesn’t like to be rude, and nothing short of kicking the man out of the house would ever keep him away from it. I assure you he is there morning, noon, and night.’

‘So is somebody else, as far as that goes,’ I make bold to observe.

‘You mean me? Ah, but I’m different,’ answers Balfour, and saunters away without deigning to explain wherein the difference lies.

Count Waldemar, on his side, showed no less bitterness and a good deal more jealousy. He had a very poor opinion of the Englishman, whom he spoke of as ‘a most effeminate person

—wass we call *ein junger Geck*,' but admitted, for all that, that he regarded him as a formidable rival.

'I know not what to think,' he said, shaking his head despondently one evening when I was smoking my after-dinner cigar with him, Balfour having, as we both knew, betaken himself to the villa on the hill. 'When I am alone mit her, then is she so kind, so pleasant as I could wish for nothing more; but if this abominable fellow is expected, at once I am sent away, and that is a thing wass I cannot endure. Very likely he is sitting beside her at this moment, in the very chair I was sitting in myself this morning.'

'Why, of course he is,' I answered stupidly. 'You don't suppose that he sits at one end of the room and Mrs. Seymour at the other, do you?'

Up jumps the Count, and begins putting on

his military greatcoat with the air of one who has a definite purpose in view.

‘What are you going to do?’ I inquired apprehensively.

‘I go to Mrs. Seymour’s,’ he replied. ‘Do you come mit me? Yes, my friend, you shall come, and we will see for ourselves whether or no she is making me a fool.’

He took down my hat from the hook on which it was hanging, clapped it on my head, pushed my passive arms into the sleeves of my overcoat, and marched me out into the moonlight without another word. I had got accustomed to his ways by this time, and made no resistance, though I felt that we were about to do a foolish thing.

On reaching the villa, we were kept some time waiting before the servant answered our ring, and when we entered the drawing-room there was nothing in the relative attitudes of its three inmates to excite any jealous sus-

pitions. Miss Grey was at the piano ; Balfour, standing behind her, was apparently intent upon turning over the pages of her music-book, and Mrs. Seymour was demurely occupied with a piece of embroidery by the fireside. The latter welcomed us with her wonted cordiality, and looked, I thought, more amused than annoyed ; but Balfour sighed impatiently, and whispered something to Miss Grey.

Count Waldemar dropped into a chair at Mrs. Seymour's side, and I am bound to say that he contrived to perform this simple action in a markedly aggressive manner. Balfour, however, did not take up the challenge, if such it were intended to be, but went on conversing in a low tone to Miss Grey.

Finding myself thus constrained to play the ungrateful part of a fifth person, I rose presently, and stepped out on to the verandah which surrounded the house.

I have nothing to say against the climate of

Hyères at such times as the *mistral* is not blowing. On this December night the air was as mild as that of an English June. There were roses in bloom in the garden ; a faint breeze was stirring among the olive-trees on the slopes ; the moon made a silvery pathway across the sea beneath, softening all the landscape, and casting such a fairy-like glamour over the arid rocks of the Hyères islands that their ancient title of the *Iles d'Or* no longer seemed inappropriate. Somebody had left a cane armchair out on the verandah. I took possession of it, lighted a cigar, and was soon lost in those pathetic memories which are the peculiar property of moonlight and middle age.

How long I had been thus pleasantly occupied I cannot say, when an increased volume of sound proceeding from within attracted my attention, and made me aware that Count Waldemar was delivering one of his harangues.

This was followed by some barely audible sentences enunciated in Balfour's slow and somewhat drawling accents, and then I heard the Count's voice saying distinctly and rather sulkily :

'Sir, you make a mistake ; the Germans are a most order-loving people. That we love Prussia I do not say—no ; but we shall remain loyal to the Emperor because he is the natural head of the Reich ; and it is only very ignorant and foolish persons who maintain the contrary.'

'Thanks. I fully appreciate the flattering inference. All the same, I expect to see the German Republic before I die.'

'*Pfui !*'

'Herr von Ravensburg, do you know that you are rather rude ?'

'Rude? *Aber !*—when a man speaks to me of the German Republic !'

At this juncture I judged it appropriate to

appear on the scene, after the fashion of the heathen deities of old, and to avert the impending strife.

‘Are you young men aware that it is past eleven o’clock?’ I asked. ‘If you stay here much longer, you will not only wear out Mrs. Seymour’s patience, but also that of the hotel-porter, who is not fond of late hours. Come, let us all say good-night, and be off.’

As I marched out of the house between the two rivals, I felt that I had displayed a tact for which everybody owed me some thanks; but my self-approval was not destined to last long. Just as we reached the limits of the small domain, Count Waldemar, who all this time had been only too evidently struggling with inward wrath, stopped short, drew himself up to his full height, and looking over my head at Balfour, ejaculated—

‘Sir!’



‘*Do* be quiet,’ I whispered entreatingly ; but he never heeded me.

‘Sir!’ he repeated. ‘Just now you have said that I was rude. Before the ladies I could not notice your worts, but now I must ask you what you have meant?’

‘Exactly what I said,’ answered Balfour, curtly.

‘In Germany we consider such speeches an insult.’

‘Do you? Well, really I can’t help it. If a man dislikes being called a boor, he ought not to behave boorishly.’

Count Waldemar told me afterwards that Balfour had been sneering at him, and trying to provoke him, all the evening through : otherwise he would not have lost his temper even after so direct an affront as this. As it was, his self-control deserted him entirely. He took two strides towards the offender, caught him up in his arms like a baby, held

him for an instant poised aloft, and then, with one mighty heave, tossed him clear over the low bank by which we were standing, into a conveniently adjacent clump of cactus-bushes.

I am sorry to say that, shocked and indignant though I was at this deed of violence upon the person of a friend and a fellow countryman, the first emotion that took possession of me was one of most unseasonable mirth; and this, gaining strength by reason of my efforts to conquer it, soon mastered me so completely that I was fain to sit me down upon the grass and hold my sides, while Count Waldemar, all his ill-humour dispersed in that one explosion of wrath, woke the echoes with eal after peal of uproarious laughter, and from the cactus-bushes below arose the maledictions of the outraged Balfour.

To a man smarting both mentally and physically as Balfour must have been doing, such conduct as this may well have appeared

as inexcusable as it was exasperating. I suppose that under any circumstances he would have been very angry; he was simply furious now, and satisfaction he vowed he would have.

How we got back to the hotel I can hardly say. I dare say we were a sufficiently comical trio—Count Waldemar still shaking with laughter, Balfour bristling with thorns like a hedgehog, and I insisting with vain volubility upon the necessity for mutual apologies. All I know is that, when I went to bed that night, I closed my eyes upon the prospect of having to play the absurd, not to say hazardous, part of second in a duel.

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.

'The *Cornhill* is the most interesting of English Magazines.'

*Vanity Fair.*

'The Magazine Reader will find no better investment for his sixpence.'

*Pall Mall Gazette.*

---

PRICE SIXPENCE MONTHLY.

ILLUSTRATED.

---

THE NEW SERIES OF THE  
**CORNHILL MAGAZINE.**

Edited by JAMES PAYN.

Each Number contains, in addition to an instalment of a  
Serial Story by a Popular Author,

**SHORT STORIES AND ARTICLES,  
BY THE BEST WRITERS.**

---

*Among the Artists who are engaged in Illustrating the New Series of*

**THE CORNHILL MAGAZINE**

ARE

G. DU MAURIER, WM. SMALL, W. RALSTON, H. FURNISS,  
E. J. WHEELER, R. C. WOODVILLE, J. P. ATKINSON,  
A. C. CORBOULD, A. T. ELWES, G. G. KILBURNE,  
WM. H. OVEREND, ROBERT BARNES, R. CALDECOTT,  
M. FITZGERALD, WALTER S. STACEY, &c.

---

Volumes I. to III. of the New Series (July 1883 to December 1884),  
Price 4s. 6d. each, bound in cloth,

**PROFUSELY ILLUSTRATED.**

ARE NOW READY, AND FORM

**VERY HANDSOME VOLUMES**

FOR

**PRESENTATION OR LIBRARY PURPOSES.**

---

*Cases for binding the Volumes may be had, price One Shilling each.*

---

London: SMITH, ELDER, & CO., 15 Waterloo Place.

NOW PUBLISHING.

NEW 'STANDARD' EDITION  
OF THE  
COMPLETE WORKS OF W. M. THACKERAY.

In Twenty-six Volumes, large 8vo. each 10s. 6d.

*This Edition is being printed from new type, on fine paper; it will include some of Mr. Thackeray's Writings which have not before been collected, with many additional Illustrations; and, with the exception of the EDITION DE LUXE, it will be the largest and handsomest edition that has been published.*

**A VOLUME WILL BE ISSUED ON THE 1st OF EACH MONTH UNTIL THE CONCLUSION OF THE SERIES.**

EXTRACTS FROM NOTICES BY THE PRESS.

THE TIMES.

'Messrs. Smith & Elder, whose monumental edition of the works of Thackeray gave an example which has been somewhat widely followed of erecting memorials to the fame of men of letters, by splendid issues of their writings, have now commenced an equally worthy, and, perhaps, more practically useful enterprise, in the publication of another collected edition of the writings of the same novelist. The first volume, containing part of "Vanity Fair," has just been published. It reproduces the form and contains the quaint illustrations, by Thackeray himself, of that original issue in monthly parts, which lingers in the recollections of his earliest readers. This will be, in the opinion of many, a very considerable advantage.'

THE SCOTSMAN.

'How many editions of Thackeray's works have been published of late years it would be difficult to say. There can have been no author of recent times who has found more or better deserved favour with the public. Another edition is now being published; it is an edition in twenty-six volumes, large 8vo. It contains the drawings by which the story was originally illustrated, and has in this respect a special value. . . . It is safe to foretell that this edition will have a success equal to that of any of its predecessors.'

THE STANDARD.

'It is now thirty-five years since "Vanity Fair" was written, and if we allow twenty years for the novel-reading period of each generation, Thackeray's popularity has stood the test of two generations, and barely a year passes without some fresh edition of his works being called for. To use the common phrase, no library is considered complete without him; and no one who buys his works is content with anything short of a library edition. For this reason we may safely predict a ready welcome and a rapid sale for the present issue, which, in respect of paper, typography, and binding, is altogether satisfactory.'

THE DAILY TELEGRAPH.

'A new edition of Thackeray's works is now to be published called the "Standard" Edition (twenty-six volumes), and the first of these is very naturally the first volume of the immortal and indestructible "Vanity Fair." Very little is left to be desired in the exterior appearance of these books, and the interior is embellished—as his works ought always to be—with the "Author's own candles," to wit, his original illustrations to his own letter-press. . . . It is pleasant to have an English classic presented to us in the guise in which "Mr. Titmarsh" appears in the "Standard" Vanity Fair.'

London: SMITH, ELDER, & CO., 15 Waterloo Place.

# ILLUSTRATED EDITION OF THE LIFE AND WORKS OF CHARLOTTE BRONTË

(CURREN BELL), AND HER SISTERS

## EMILY and ANNE BRONTË

(ELLIS AND ACTON BELL).

In Seven Volumes, large crown 8vo. handsomely bound in cloth, price 5s. per volume.

The descriptions in 'Jane Eyre' and the other fictions by Charlotte Brontë and her Sisters being mostly of actual places, the Publishers considered that Views are the most suitable Illustrations for the novels. They are indebted for a clue to the real names of the most interesting scenes to a friend of the Brontë family, who enabled the artist, Mr. G. M. Wimperis, to identify the places described. He made faithful sketches of them on the spot, and drew them on wood. It is hoped that these views will add fresh interest to the reading of the stories.

JANE EYRE. By CHARLOTTE BRONTË. With Five Illustrations.

SHIRLEY. By CHARLOTTE BRONTË. With Five Illustrations.

VILLETTE. By CHARLOTTE BRONTË. With Five Illustrations.

THE PROFESSOR AND POEMS. By CHARLOTTE BRONTË. With Poems by her Sisters and Father. With Five Illustrations.

WUTHERING HEIGHTS. By EMILY BRONTË. And AGNES GREY. By ANNE BRONTË. With a Preface and Biographical Notice of both Authors by CHARLOTTE BRONTË. With Five Illustrations.

THE TENANT OF WILDFELL HALL. By ANNE BRONTË. With Five Illustrations.

LIFE OF CHARLOTTE BRONTË. By Mrs. GASKELL. With Seven Illustrations.

\*.\* The volumes are also to be had in fcp. 8vo. limp cloth, price 2s. 6d. each.

---

UNIFORM EDITION OF

## MRS. GASKELL'S NOVELS AND TALES.

In Seven Volumes, each containing Four Illustrations.

Price 3s. 6d. each, bound in cloth; or in Sets of Seven Volumes, handsomely bound in half-morocco, price £2. 10s.

CONTENTS OF THE VOLUMES:

VOL. I. WIVES AND DAUGHTERS.

VOL. II. NORTH AND SOUTH.

VOL. III. SYLVIA'S LOVERS.

VOL. IV. CRANFORD.

Company Manners—The Well of Pen-Morpha—The Heart of John Middleton—Traits and Stories of the Huguenots—Six Weeks at Heppenheim—The Squire's Story—Libbie Marsh's Three Eras—Curious if True—The Moorland Cottage—The Sexton's Hero—Disappearances—Right at last—The Manchester Marriage—Lois the Witch—The Crooked Branch.

VOL. V. MARY BARTON.

Cousin Phillis—My French Master—The Old Nurse's Story—Bessy's Troubles at Home—Christmas Storms and Sunshine.

VOL. VI. RUTH.

The Grey Woman—Morton Hall—Mr. Harrison's Confessions—Hand and Heart.

VOL. VII. LIZZIE LEIGH.

A Dark Night's Work—Round the Sofa—My Lady Ludlow—An Accursed Race—The Doom of the Griffiths—Half a Lifetime Ago—The Poor Clare—The Half-Brothers.

The Volumes are also to be had in fcp. 8vo. limp cloth, price 2s. 6d. each.

---

London: SMITH, ELDER, & CO., 15 Waterloo Place.

# SMITH, ELDER, & CO.'S POPULAR LIBRARY.

*Fcp. 8vo. Limp Cloth.*

---

By the Sisters BRONTË.

2s. 6d. each.

JANE EYRE. By Charlotte Brontë.

SHIRLEY. By Charlotte Brontë.

VILLETTE. By Charlotte Brontë.

THE TENANT OF WILDFELL HALL. By Anne Brontë.

WUTHERING HEIGHTS. By Emily Brontë. AGNES GREY. By Anne Brontë.

With Preface and Memoir of the Sisters, by Charlotte Brontë.

THE PROFESSOR. By Charlotte Brontë. To which are added the Poems of Charlotte, Emily, and Anne Brontë.

---

By Mrs. GASKELL.

2s. 6d. each.

WIVES AND DAUGHTERS.

NORTH AND SOUTH.

SYLVIA'S LOVERS.

CRANFORD, AND OTHER TALES.

MARY BARTON, AND OTHER TALES.

RUTH, AND OTHER TALES.

LIZZIE LEIGH, AND OTHER TALES.

LIFE OF CHARLOTTE BRONTË.

---

By LEIGH HUNT.

2s. 6d. each.

IMAGINATION AND FANCY: or, Selections from the English Poets.

THE TOWN: Its Memorable Characters and Events. Illustrated.

AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF LEIGH HUNT.

MEN, WOMEN, AND BOOKS; a Selection of Sketches, Essays, and Critical Memoirs.

WIT AND HUMOUR: Selected from the English Poets.

A JAR OF HONEY FROM MOUNT HYBLA; or, Sweets from Sicily in Particular; and Pastoral Poetry in General.

TABLE TALK. To which are added IMAGINARY CONVERSATIONS OF POPE AND SWIFT.

---

*Uniform with the above, 2s. 6d. each.*

THE SMALL HOUSE AT ALLINGTON. By Anthony Trollope.

THE CLAVERINGS. By Anthony Trollope.

FRAMLEY PARSONAGE. By Anthony Trollope.

ROMOLA. By George Eliot.

BELOW THE SURFACE. By Sir A. H. Elton, Bart.

TRANSFORMATION. By Nathaniel Hawthorne.

DEERBROOK. By Harriet Martineau.

HOUSEHOLD EDUCATION. By Harriet Martineau.

AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF LUTFULLAH.

LECTURES ON THE ENGLISH HUMOURISTS OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY. By W. M. Thackeray.

THE FOUR GEORGES. With Illustrations by the Author. By W. M. Thackeray.

PAUL THE POPE AND PAUL THE FRIAR. By T. A. Trollope.

THE ROSE-GARDEN. By the Author of 'Unawares.'

CHRONICLES OF DUSTYPORE. A Tale of Modern Anglo-Indian Society. By 'the Author of 'Wheat and Tares.'

IN THE SILVER AGE. By Holme Lee.

---

London: SMITH, ELDER, & CO., 15 Waterloo Place.

**SMITH, ELDER, & CO.'S POPULAR LIBRARY—continued.**

*Pictorial Covers, price Two Shillings each.*

**By WILKIE COLLINS.**

NO NAME.

AFTER DARK.

ARMADALE.

\*.\* *The above may also be had in Limp Cloth, price 2s. 6d. each.*

**By the Author of**  
**'JOHN HALIFAX, GENTLEMAN.'**  
ROMANTIC TALES. | DOMESTIC STORIES.

**By HOLME LEE.**

AGAINST WIND AND TIDE.  
SYLVAN HOLT'S DAUGHTER.  
KATHIE BRANDE.  
WARP AND WOOF.  
ANNIS WARLEIGH'S FORTUNES.  
THE WORTLEBANK DIARY.

BASIL GODFREY'S CAPRICE.  
MAUDE TALBOT.  
COUNTRY STORIES.  
KATHERINE'S TRIAL.  
MR. WYNYARD'S WARD.

THE BEAUTIFUL MISS BARRINGTON.

**By Captain GRONOW.**

RECOLLECTIONS AND ANECDOTES OF THE CAMP, THE COURT, AND THE CLUBS.  
ANECDOTES OF CELEBRITIES OF LONDON AND PARIS. To which are added LAST RECOLLECTIONS OF THE CAMP, THE COURT, AND THE CLUBS.

*Uniform with the above.*

GRASP YOUR NETTLE. By E. Lynn Linton.  
AGNES OF SORRENTO. By Mrs. H. B. Stowe.  
TALES OF THE COLONIES; or, Adventures of an Emigrant. By C. Rowcroft.  
LAVINIA. By the Author of 'Dr. Antonio' and 'Lorenzo Benoni.'  
THE MOORS AND THE FENS. By Mrs. J. H. Riddell.  
HESTER KIRTON. By Katharine S. Macquoid.  
BY THE SEA. By Katharine S. Macquoid.  
THE HOTEL DU PETIT ST. JEAN.  
VERA. By the Author of 'The Hôtel du Petit St. Jean.'  
IN THAT STATE OF LIFE. By Hamilton Aldé.  
MORALS AND MYSTERIES. By Hamilton Aldé.  
MR. AND MRS. FAULCONBRIDGE. By Hamilton Aldé.  
SIX MONTHS HENCE. By the Author of 'Behind the Veil,' &c.  
THE STORY OF THE PLEBISCITE. By MM. Erckmann-Chatrian.  
THE CONSCRIPT and WATERLOO. By MM. Erckmann-Chatrian. In one volume.  
GABRIEL DENVER. By Oliver Madox Brown.  
TAKE CARE WHOM YOU TRUST. By Compton Reade.  
PEARL AND EMERALD. By R. E. Francillon.  
ISEULTE. By the Author of 'The Hôtel du Petit St. Jean.'  
PENRUDDOCKE. By Hamilton Aldé.  
A GARDEN OF WOMEN. By Sarah Tytler.  
BRIGADIER FREDERIC. By MM. Erckmann-Chatrian.  
MOLLY BAWN. By the Author of 'Phyllis,' &c.  
MATRIMONY. By W. E. NORRIS.  
PHYLLIS. By the Author of 'Molly Bawn,' &c.  
MADEMOISELLE DE MERSAC. By W. E. NORRIS.  
MRS. GEOFFREY. By the Author of 'Molly Bawn.'  
BEN MILNER'S WOOING. By HOLME LEE.  
AIRY FAIRY LILIAN. By the Author of 'Molly Bawn.'  
FOR PERCIVAL. By MARGARET VELEY.

---

London: SMITH, ELDER, & CO., 15 Waterloo Place.



CHEAPER ILLUSTRATED EDITION  
OF THE  
**COMPLETE WORKS OF W. M. THACKERAY.**

In Twenty-four Volumes, crown 8vo. price 3s. 6d. each.

Sets in cloth, price £4. 4s.; or handsomely bound in half-morocco,  
• price £8.

*Containing nearly all the small Woodcut Illustrations of the former Editions,*

AND MANY NEW ILLUSTRATIONS BY EMINENT ARTISTS.

THIS EDITION CONTAINS ALTOGETHER 1,626 ILLUSTRATIONS

BY

<p>THE AUTHOR. LUKE FIELDS, A.R.A. Mrs. BUTLER (Miss Elizabeth Thompson). GEORGE DU MAURIER. RICHARD DOYLE. FREDERICK WALKER, A.R.A. GEORGE CRUIKSHANK.</p>	<p>JOHN LEECH. FRANK DICKSEE. LINLEY SAMBOURNE. F. BARNARD. E. J. WEBBER. F. A. FRANKER. CHARLES KEENE. R. B. WALLACE. &amp;c. &amp;c. &amp;c.</p>	<p>J. P. ATKINSON. W. J. WEBB. T. R. MACQUOID. M. FITZGERALD. W. RALSTON. JOHN COLLIER. H. FURNISS. G. G. KILBURN.</p>
---	--	--

- VANITY FAIR.** Illustrated by the Author. 2 vols.
- PENDENNIS.** Illustrated by the Author. 2 vols.
- THE NEWCOMES.** Illustrated by RICHARD DOYLE. 2 vols.
- ESMOND.** Illustrated by GEORGE DU MAURIER.
- THE VIRGINIANS.** Illustrated by the Author. 2 vols.
- THE ADVENTURES OF PHILIP.** Illustrated by the Author, FREDERICK WALKER, and R. B. WALLACE. 2 vols.
- THE GREAT HOGGARTY DIAMOND; A LITTLE DINNER AT TOWN MINN'S; CORNHILL TO CAIRO.** Illustrated by the Author, J. P. ATKINSON, and W. J. WEBB.
- CHRISTMAS BOOKS.** Illustrated by the Author and RICHARD DOYLE.
- THE BOOK OF SNOBS; TRAVELS AND SKETCHES.** Illustrated by the Author.
- BURLESQUES.** Illustrated by the Author and GEORGE CRUIKSHANK.
- PARIS SKETCH BOOK; LITTLE TRAVELS; and ROADSIDE SKETCHES.** Illustrated by the Author, T. R. MACQUOID, and J. P. ATKINSON.
- THE YELLOWPLUSH PAPERS; THE FITZBOODLE PAPERS; COX'S DIARY; CHARACTER SKETCHES.** Illustrated by the Author and GEORGE CRUIKSHANK.
- THE IRISH SKETCH BOOK; CRITICAL REVIEWS.** Illustrated by the Author, GEORGE CRUIKSHANK, JOHN LEECH, and M. FITZGERALD.
- THE MEMOIRS OF BARRY LYNDON; THE FATAL BOOTS.** Illustrated by J. E. MILLAIS, R.A., GEORGE CRUIKSHANK, and W. RALSTON.
- CATHERINE: a Story; MEN'S WIVES; THE BEDFORD ROW CONSPIRACY.** Illustrated by the Author, LUKE FIELDS, A.R.A., and R. B. WALLACE.
- BALLADS: THE ROSE AND THE RING.** Illustrated by the Author, Mrs. BUTLER (Miss Elizabeth Thompson), GEORGE DU MAURIER, JOHN COLLIER, H. FURNISS, G. G. KILBURN, M. FITZGERALD, and J. P. ATKINSON.
- ROUNABOUT PAPERS.** To which is added THE SECOND FUNERAL OF NAPOLEON. Illustrated by the Author, CHARLES KEENE, and M. FITZGERALD.
- THE FOUR GEORGES, and THE ENGLISH HUMOURISTS OF THE EIGHTEEN'H CENTURY.** Illustrated by the Author, FRANK DICKSEE, LINLEY SAMBOURNE, FREDERICK WALKER, and F. BARNARD.
- LOVEL THE WIDOWER; THE WOLVES AND THE LAMB; DENIS DUVAL.** To which is added an Essay on the Writings of W. M. THACKERAY by LESLIE STEPHEN. Illustrated by the Author and FREDERICK WALKER.

London: SMITH, ELDER, & CO., 15 Waterloo Place.

